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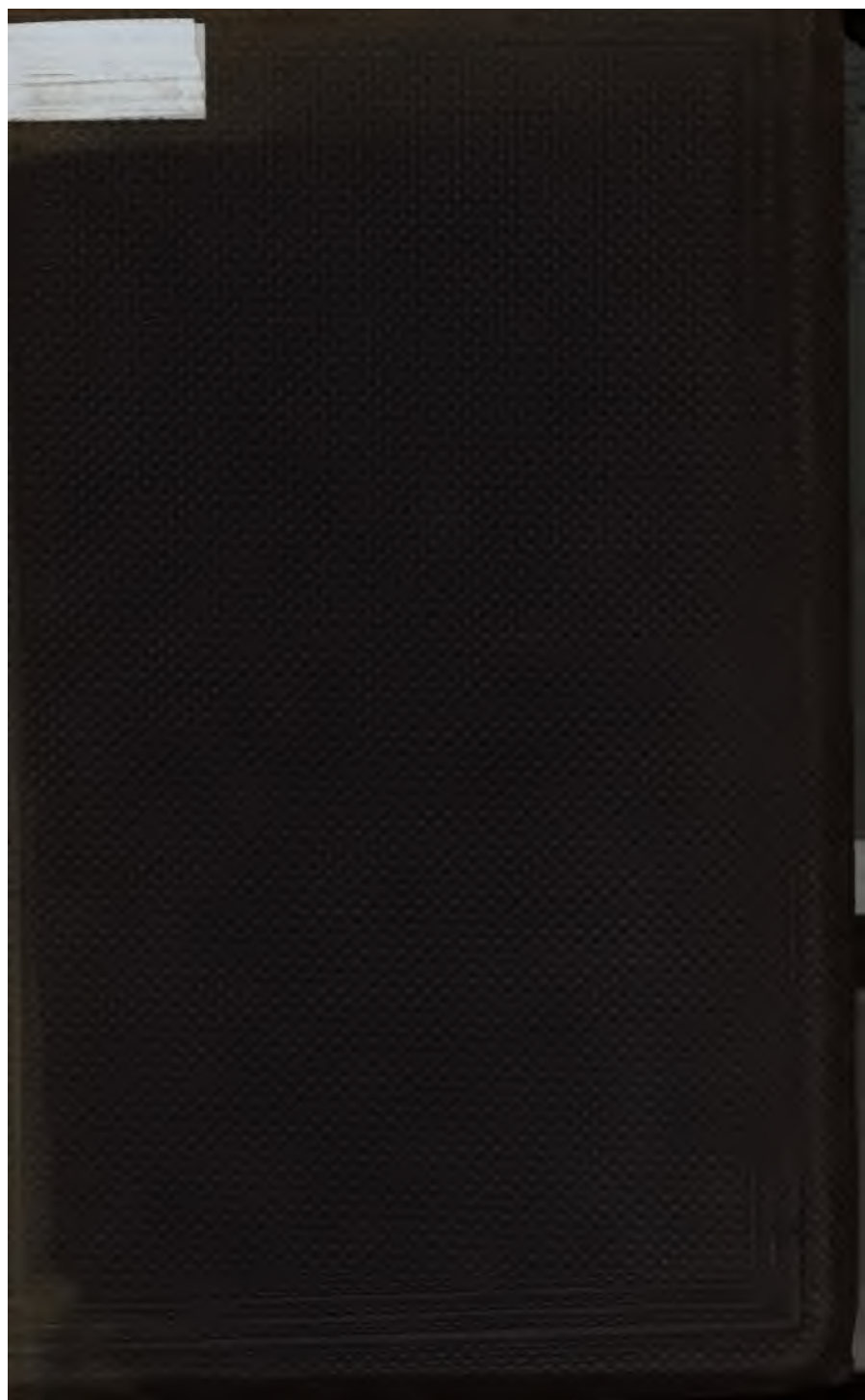
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Harvard Divinity School



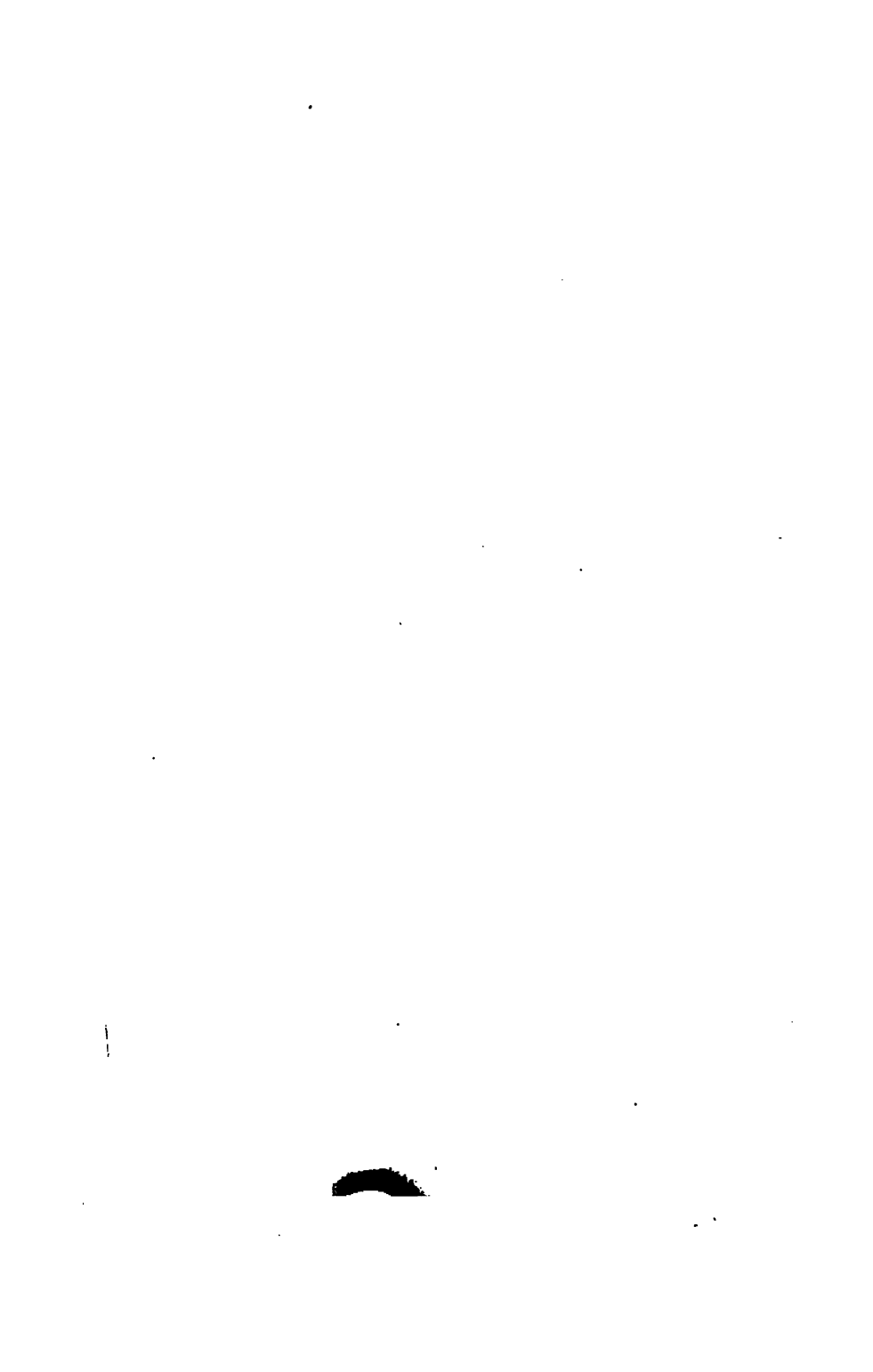
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REPRESENTATIVE MEN

OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY

GEORGE C. BALDWIN, D.D.

NEW YORK:
BLAKEMAN & MASON,

310 BROADWAY.

1860.

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T. B. SMITH & SON,
83 & 84 Beekman street.

PRINTED BY
GEORGE RUSSELL & Co.,
Duane St.

P R E F A C E .

TROY, N. Y., August 1, 1859.

REV. G. C. BALDWIN, D. D.,

DEAR SIR,—Your friends, who on a previous occasion advised the publication of your Lectures on “Representative Women,” have not been disappointed in the success with which that volume has met. They have satisfactory evidence that it has done good, and believe that it is adapted to permanent usefulness in the thousands of families in whose libraries it has found a place. They are glad to learn that it has still a steady increase of circulation.

The undersigned, who constitute the present Boards of Trustees and Deacons of the Church you have served in the ministry now more than fifteen years, have listened with interest to your late course upon “Representative Men of the New Testament,” and earnestly advise and request their publication. We believe that they will not only constitute an appropriate mate volume to the “Representative Women,” but embodying, as they do, so much of the biographical and ecclesiastical histories of the New Testament, so much of doc-

trine and precept in relation to individual character, they can not fail of being useful. It gives us pleasure to add, dear sir, that in making this request, we are assured that we are not only giving expression to our own feelings, but to those of the large audiences who listened to them.

Yours, truly,

JAMES WAGER,	SAMUEL S. SARGEANT,
JOHN B. FORD,	JAMES R. PRENTICE,
CURTIS WILBUR,	JOSEPH DEGOLYER,
CALVIN WARNER,	FREDERICK A. SHELDON,
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JUSTUS E. GREGORY,	GEORGE R. DAVIS,
FRANCIS A. FALES,	JAMES T. MAIN,
J. C. MATTICE.	

GENTLEMEN:—Reasons, such as are mentioned in your note, have decided the publication of the Course of Lectures to which you so kindly allude. I desire, in connection, to call attention to a few particulars.

1. In regard to the title I have given them. As I did in the correspondence published in my former volume, I now also acknowledge that it was suggested by that of Mr. Emerson's excellent book, which has become a standard work of its class in our literature. The wide difference, however between his learned and

my humble effort is, that while his characters are "Representative Men" of the world, mine are "Representative Men of the New Testament."

2. It is but fair to judge of a book, by a just comparison of its execution with the design of its author. My design in these Lectures was simply this. First, to collate all the facts recorded in the sacred Scriptures concerning these men, together with whatever facts I could gather from other reliable sources, so as to present their biographies in a connected form. Next, to analyze the characters found in such biographies, and develop their leading, and therefore representative elements, and finally to deduce from both, lessons of practical, present, and permanent importance. This was my design; whether I have succeeded or failed in its realization, others must judge.

3. You will perceive that the plain, sometimes colloquial, often direct style in which these Lectures were delivered, is tenaciously retained in their publication. This may be an error. Many, I know, will deem it such. But when I preached them I addressed you, as man to man. This style is my way of doing that. In their publication, I desire to speak personally, to the large circle to whom the book may come, in the same familiar, and, I hope. earnest and honest method.

4. I acknowledge my sincere gratification in view

of the kindness with which my "Representative Women" was received by the press and the public, and my devout gratitude to God for obvious tokens of his gracious blessing which has attended it. To him, "the God of our fathers," and our God, I now commend this effort, which I deeply feel to be far below what it ought to be, with the prayer that in the magnitude of his grace, he may make it a blessing to those who may peruse it, and an humble means of promoting his own glory.

With sentiments of sincere affection,

I remain your friend and pastor,

GEO. C. BALDWIN.

TROR, N. Y., September 1, 1869.

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I.

The Herald Preacher.



JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The Herald Preacher.

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"A BURNING AND SHINING LIGHT."  
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EVENTS generally are preceded by heralds of their coming. Such is the order of nature. The blossom is heralded by the bud, and the fruit by the blossom—night by twilight, and day by the glow of morning. The splendors of summer are heralded by the beauties of spring—the maturity of autumn by the growth of summer, and the death of winter by the decay of autumn.

Such is the order of Providence. Each of those events, that loom up like mountains in the scenery of history, every discovery of science, every achievement of art, every outgrowth of philosophy, every great step in general progress, has had from the beginning its appropriate harbinger.

Such was the fact in regard to that grandest of all events—the advent of the world's Redeemer. It was preceded by "wonders in the heavens above, and signs in the earth beneath." Over Bethlehem trembled that mysterious star, whose wondrous radiance never before nor since illumined earth's night-sky, announcing his

birth; and thirty years afterwards, when about to commence his public work, he was preceded by "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

We can not but feel a deep interest in the character of this herald preacher, when it is remembered that upon him our Lord pronounced the highest eulogium he ever uttered with reference to a human being. He declared of John that "*he was a burning and shining light,*" and that "*he was more than a prophet,*" thus placing him above that galaxy of worthies, which constituted the chief glory of the Hebrew nation. Our Lord said more than even this. He affirmed that "*of all born of women, there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist,*" thus placing him on the loftiest pinnacle of human greatness.

Let us briefly review the record of John's exterior life; and then attempt an analysis of his character as a man and a preacher.

In order to bring him distinctly before our minds, let us look at him as he is first presented to us in the gospel, standing on the verdant bank of the Jordan, whose waters were alike renowned and hallowed by his sacred ministry. Think of his relative geographical position there. Eastward of him are the venerable mountains of Moab, foremost of which Pisgah towers in lonely grandeur, while below it lie, in all their famed luxuriance, the Moabitish plains. Northward glitter the snowy peaks of Lebanon, between whose lofty summit and himself rolls the lovely valley of the Jordan.

Westward stretch the plains of Jericho, skirted by the mountains on which Jerusalem sits enthroned. Southward rise, in broken ranges, the wilderness hills of Judea, amid which the Dead Sea lies embosomed ; while over him is suspended the cloudless magnificence of an oriental sky.

Look now at the preacher himself. He is a stalwart, strange-appearing man, of some thirty years of age, who has been in "the deserts of Judea until the day of his shewing unto Israel." There, amid stern solitudes, wild ravines, barren crags, living upon the plainest food, drinking from nature's pure fountains, communing with God, who "sanctified him from his mother's womb," and appointed him to a sublime mission, he has been maturing physically, intellectually, and spiritually, for a career which is to be brief in its duration, brilliant in its success, and terrible in its termination. His apparel is peculiar. His form is robed in coarse cloth, made of the shaggy camel's hair, and a leathern girdle encircles his loins. A heavy beard falls like a shield upon his broad breast. His brow is full and ample, his eye clear and piercing, and his countenance is radiant with high intellectuality, mellowed and beautified by long-continued and profound communing with grand spiritualities ; while an intense enthusiasm, one great purpose, burns in every glance, and glows in every expression of his features.

Of this man the sacred record says that he was both the object and fulfillment of several specific prophecies, uttered many centuries before his birth ; that

his birth itself was attended by miraculous interpositions, and that when first clasped to the bosom of his joyful father, that venerable priest's soul was stirred by the spirit of prophecy, while from his aged lips broke forth these jubilant words :

“ And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace ”

The record further states that this wonderful child “ was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth,” and that “ he grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts until the day of his shewing unto Israel.”

From that point we have no further account of him during thirty years. An entire generation of earth's inhabitants had passed away, before he again appeared on the historic scene. At length the predestined period came. The man was prepared for the work, and the work was ready for the man.

Then, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, when the universal Jewish mind was agitated by conflicting emotions, stirred to its lowest depths by a complex sentiment of proud independence—hatred against Roman tyranny, and hope of a Deliverer; when gross formality in religion and civil violence were everywhere rampant; when the voice of no living prophet had

been heard during the long and dreary waste of four hundred and fifty years; when the public feeling hung poised and tremulous—just six months before the manifestation of the Saviour of the world—this preacher came forth from his desert home, and proclaimed in trumpet tones, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; prepare ye the way of the Lord.” His proclamation, reverberating like echoing thunder through all ranks of society, shook the land, startling populace, priest, and politician, insomuch that “all Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan” poured forth their thronging thousands to hear him; and multitudes were “baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”

In this work of preaching and baptizing six months passed away, during which he was “the observed of all observers,” the most popular and successful man of his day, gathering about himself every element of public curiosity and all the long-cherished hopes of Judaism. Again and again deputations came to him with the inquiry, “Art thou the Christ?” and his constant response was, “I am the voice of one crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Look, now, on the crowning scene of this man’s public life, which, however familiar, can never lose its interest.

It is spring time. The pure air is redolent with the fragrance of fresh flowers. The sacred Jordan, over whose waters the Baptist’s voice has so often echoed, is

at its flood. In bold relief upon its bank stands the preacher, surrounded by a vast crowd of eager hearers. The point of the river before us has rich historial associations. Here the Israelites first passed through into the promised land. Here in after years the waters were divided, when smitten by the prophet's mantle, and from yon further bank Elijah stepped into the chariot of fire which God sent to bear him to heaven. Do you wonder that John commenced his ministry at a place so sacred in the memories of the pious of all ages? Observe, now, that he has ceased speaking. Unwonted fire beams in his eyes. Unwonted, strong, expectant energy makes his stalwart form tremble. Ah! he is *conscious of a presence* which has never graced his audiences before! He is silent, and a strange stillness settles down on that multitudinous mass, unbroken save by the ripples of wavelets against the reedy shore, for all intuitively feel that some august event is at hand. All eyes are fixed on the preacher's, but his own are riveted upon the form of a majestic stranger who has stood unnoticed amid the crowd.

Conceive now, if you can, the surprise, the amazement, of that crowd of expectant Jews, as, pointing with his right hand toward the stranger, and in a voice heavy with the profoundest emotions, John utters that grand exclamation which generations and centuries had listened in vain to hear—that glorious exclamation which revealed the speedy fulfillment of the long line of types, from the lamb on Abel's altar down to the last accepted sacrifice—that brief exclamation, which has thrilled

through human souls during eighteen hundred years, and has become so familiar to you now, but which then for the first time burst upon mortal ears—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." The wondering amazement deepens as the Messiah approaches his herald and asks for baptism. O! see the preacher's head droop, his eyes grow dim with tears, his manly form shrink! Hear his voice break with emotion, as he responds, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Calmly Jesus says, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Hesitating no longer, the illustrious administrator and the far more illustrious candidate go down into the water, and "Jesus is baptized of John in the Jordan." Then, according to one evangelist, "being baptized, Jesus prayed;" and in this first public prayer of our Lord, offered up from amid the waters of his baptism—that same voice which had pealed forth from heaven over the slumbering chaos of old, when he said, "Let there be light"—arose to that heaven in tones of melody softer than the breathings of an *Æolian* harp. After which, "he went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And, strange as it may seem, after the testimony borne to him "the next day," these two distinguished personages, who sustained such intimate relations to

each other, never met again on earth—never met again until, their mortal life-purposes accomplished, wearing crowns of victory—one gained on Calvary, and the other in Herod's dungeon—both stood approved before the throne of the eternal Father.

Think for a moment of the interest which culminated over the meeting of this herald and his Lord. In them ages met together. The future confirmed in Christ the promise of the past; and the past did homage to the future, when John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." It was in fact the meeting of the old covenant and the new, and the sanction of the new by the old. History contains the record of many memorable meetings of distinguished characters, such as that which transpired when Darius the Persian and Alexander the Macedonian met at Arbela, and oriental luxury yielded to European valor; and that when Diæus the Greek and Mummius the Roman, met, and the refinement of Greece gave way before the energy of Rome; and that when Henry VIII. and Francis I. met on the "field of the cloth of gold," and settled the feuds of centuries between England and France. And that, too, was a brilliant historic meeting, when Napoleon I., the representative of plebeian genius, and Alexander I., the representative of monarchic ancestral dignity, met on the "raft of Tilsit" to decide the destinies of Europe. But these, and all similar meetings, with their gorgeous pomp and worldly results, dwindle into absolute insignificance before that on the Jordan's bank, of the world's Saviour and his introducer, whose com-

bined temporal and spiritual consequences permeate the world to-day, shall reach through all generations in earth's "ages to come," and then flow over and mingle with and give their coloring to the great currents of eternity.

A single scene more claims your attention ; it is the final one. The ancient fortress of Machaerus rises before us, with its massive walls, barred windows, heavy doors, and stern Roman guard. Passing through its vaulted gateway, along its gloomy corridors, down a stone stairway, we enter one of its dismal dungeons, where sits a pale, wan, chained prisoner. Who is he ? Ah ! it is the once popular preacher, upon whose ministry thousands on thousands hung with delight. Wherefore is he here ? Has he violated any law ? Has he committed any crime ? Nay, nay : he is in prison now for the "word of God, and the testimony of Jesus." In the discharge of his duty he fearlessly rebuked the royal Herod for his foul and incestuous marriage ; and the iron hand of guilty power is on him now, and has been during eighteen long and weary months. And you may imagine how irksome such imprisonment, for so long a time, must be to one whose life has been spent amid free air on free mountains. But this is not the worst of his case. The masses who once crowded around and admired him have now forgotten him ; only a few disciples have remained faithful in his misfortune and disgrace. Nor is this the worst. During all this time Jesus, whom he had heralded and baptized, has not visited him once, has not sent even a single word

of sympathy to his lonely dungeon. This strange and appalling fact has made him nervous, sad, and sorrowful. Gloomy doubts, horrid fears, like boding specters, have begun to flit around him through the gloom, and distress his spirit intensely. He can endure it no longer, and sends to the Lord a deputation, who soon return with the glorious message which causes the clouds to pass away from his brow and heart, spectral doubts to disappear, and makes him forget his own ignominy and danger in the assured certainty that he whom he baptized is the Messiah, that the work he began is progressing; and enables him to calmly wait for whatever doom may be in reserve for him.

He shall not wait long.

It is the still hour of midnight, and on his prison couch the doomed preacher sleeps soundly and sweetly, while all around him is silent as the house of death. At last the hour of his deliverance has struck, and the grating noise of the opening door awakens the sleeper; and he sees by the gleams of the torchlight the form of his executioner approach. Full well he knows that death came into that opened door, with that government officer. But look at him now! No tremor shakes that wasted form. No fear blanches those sunken cheeks. No tears dim those grand eyes. No weak, faltering words fall from those pallid lips. But committing his soul for the last time into the hands of his heavenly Father, he receives the murderous blow which severs his head from his body; and while his blood gushes forth upon the dungeon floor, and that poor, ghastly,

gory head is borne to Herod's palace, his freed spirit speeds its upward way into the sheltering bosom of his God! Farewell, thou proto-martyr preacher! thou art beyond the tyrant's power now; immortal amaranth bedecks thy triumphant immortality, and as we gaze upon thee in thy resplendent glory, we almost envy that toil and suffering which were at once its percursor and pledge!

Thus much with regard to his exterior life. Let us now pass to *a consideration of his interior character as a man and a preacher*. And at the outset of this branch of our subject, permit me to remark again that we can not but feel a deep interest in the study of a character upon which our divine Lord pronounced such a lofty eulogium; we can not fail to be impressed with the conviction that that character must have been made up of a rare combination of model elements; elements which are needed in the ministry of to-day; elements which Educational societies and Theological institutions should aim at developing in those young men, who, under their training, are preparing to engage in the sublime work which John commenced, and occupy positions, certainly not identical with, and yet as certainly in some respects similar to that which he occupied.

What were some of these?

1. *A noble type of manhood.*

He was a man before he was a preacher; and he never could have become the preacher he did, had he not been the man he was. Think of his *physical* manhood. It was strong, vigorous, pure, unweakened by

a single luxury, unstained by a single vice. You behold his physical passions all subjected to the control of a rightly directed will. You see him practicing the severest self-denial—evermore turning aside from the seductions of a corrupt society, and the fascinations of sensual pleasures.

Think of his *intellectual and spiritual* manhood, and you discover a mind of exalted order, cultured and developed, a heart full of noble and generous affections, a spiritual nature which grasped with deathless tenacity the sublimest truths, and maintained them amidst the opposition of a hostile world. In that nature was a culmination of moral graces, a humility which the greatest success could not corrupt, a devotion which nothing could divert, and a magnanimity which no circumstances could contract; for in the hour of his grandest triumph he said, "I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes; he must increase, but I must decrease." There was no moment when he was not perfectly willing to have his morning glory absorbed in the superior splendor of the rising sun. To these attributes of his physical, intellectual, and spiritual nature was superadded, in an eminent degree, *the influences of the Holy Spirit*. This gave its crowning glory to his manhood. This enabled him to come in the "power and spirit of Elijah." Such a type of manhood the ministry of Christ has ever needed; especially does it need it in the present age. Do I err in affirming that never since the world began has so high an estimate been placed by society upon *mere*

manhood as at this hour? that its influence was never before so palpably recognized as a mighty potentiality in all departments of life; and that its relation to the office and success of the preacher was never so vital, so essential as now? Is it not obviously true, that other things being equal, a minister is respected, influential, and successful just in the ratio of the character of his manhood? The fact is, that no man needs a healthy, well-developed, vigorous body more than does a preacher. No man needs a mind, cultured, trained, expanded, and well furnished, more than does the minister of Jesus. No man needs the possession and development of high moral virtues more than he. In truth, what is a sadder sight than to see one who combines great intellectual power with a dwarfed moral development—one who surrounds himself with a halo of brilliancy in the pulpit, but whose private life is darkened by envy, jealousy, covetousness or ambition? Learning, eloquence, oratory, are all valuable, but a true, generous, christian manhood is worth more than they all. The universal heart of society reverences and bows before its native majesty; men can not help honoring it, and God delights in approbating it.

To no class on earth, therefore, does the dying advice of Israel's king to his son, and which is echoed in apostolic injunction, "Show thyself a man," "Quit yourselves like men," apply with such direct and personal force as to ministers of the gospel; and any system of education, philosophy, or doctrine, which damages a student's manhood, must of necessity be radically wrong.

The fact is, that the churches need and call loudly for *broadly-developed* men for pastors; the truth needs strong men for its defense and propagation; the world needs men to lead it back to its allegiance to God. And I care not whatsoever else one possesses—how muchsoever else he possesses—if he be not a high-minded, pure, honest, true man, able to rise above the mean pettinesses of selfishness, the hollow and narrow conventionalities of worldliness, break down and trample under his indignant feet the iron trammels of bigotry and stand self-poised amid the gloomiest discouragements, and endure with fortitude the inevitable ills of his position—then he is not, what John was, the man for the times, the man whom the great work of God and humanity calls for. His education, his diploma, his black coat and white cravat, his official importance and professional dignity, his splendid sermons and mechanical oratory, will not, can not make up for the lack of this. Congregations may listen to him, may admire his abilities, but they can not in their hearts respect, love, or venerate him. Whereas, if he possess this, and it is consecrated by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, although he may not have the other attainments to which I have referred, that sanctified manhood will keep him awake to the lofty solemnities of his position, make him sympathetic with all the wants and woes of humanity, cause him to abound in every good word and work, and thus secure to him the love and confidence of all the good, and, in spite of themselves, the respect of all the bad. Herod, in all his pomp of power, feared

and respected the humble Baptist in his coarse robe of camel's hair; for his own nature, true to itself, told him that the royalty of John's resplendent manhood was vastly superior to his own mere positional regality.

2. *What were his characteristics as a preacher?*

This was his distinctive official work. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching." By this method he shook the Judean world and laid broad and deep the foundations of the new dispensation. And how fearful were the solemnities which clustered around his ministry! For it was his duty, not merely to announce the welcome intelligence that the Messiah and his kingdom were at hand, but by the proclamation of stern and unwelcome truths to prepare his way.

And the first thing that we observe in his official character is, *the clearness with which he saw and comprehended the great spiritualities which God sent him to preach.* Time sufficient to obtain this had been given to him. He had not been prematurely hurried into his work. He did not commence until the maturity of thirty years was upon him; and, therefore, when he did enter upon it, his mind was full of distinct perceptions, and his heart was full of experimental realizations, of that truth.

Another point is, *the entireness of his consecration to his distinctive mission.* He made that the single object of life. To that he subordinated every thing. From that neither Judean politics, nor literature, nor business ever diverted him for a moment.

And still another is, *the unflinching fidelity with*

which he met and discharged the responsibilities of his official position. He never made an effort to accommodate the doctrines which God sent him to preach to the taste or prejudice of his hearers. In fact, he was an intense Christian radical, laying "the ax at the root of the tree;" hurling denunciations against domineering sectarians, and warning them in awful tones to "flee from the wrath to come;" while with equal fidelity he rebuked the general bigotry of the Jews, urging upon them repentance toward God and faith in the coming Messiah. Moreover, he charged the governmental officers to be honest, and the Roman soldiers to commit no violence. With the dauntlessness of Moses before Pharaoh, the fire of Elijah on Carmel, the energy of Peter at Pentecost, and the majesty of Paul on Mars hill; indifferent alike to the applause and the approbation of his hearers, he proclaimed, with the earnestness of his concentrated nature, the solemn truth with which he was commissioned. And more than this, he dared to rebuke special iniquity in high places. He exposed and condemned before earth and heaven the foul and corrupting wickedness of Herod. This, however, was collateral to, although connected with, the great specific work of preaching the atoning, sin-bearing Christ, who was about to come, as the only hope of the world. Do you wonder that with such characteristics he was a powerful and successful preacher, whose influence permeated his age? Do you wonder that the relations of his ministry with that of our Lord were so intimate and glorious? or that, many years

afterwards, when Paul visited the distant city of Ephesus, he found disciples there who still bore his name? or that to this day, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, a sect is found in Mesopotamia and Persia who call themselves "Disciples of John?"

I now submit to you that these characteristics are the needed elements of the ministry of to-day. Do you doubt it? Let us see.

Is not a clear, comprehensive, scriptural understanding of what we are to preach—such as this preacher had—a systematic and thorough theological education, which shall put us in possession of the great facts and doctrines of primitive Christianity, in their objective and subjective relations, necessary to enable us to cope successfully with the deadly foes of the gospel, which the neology of Germany, the transcendental philosophy and hydra-headed fanaticism of our own land have given birth to during the past generation? The simple fact is, that much of the thinking, the philosophy, the sentimentalism, the lecturing, and the preaching of the present day, mixes up error with truth, and, calling its product the gospel, baptizes it in the name of Christ, and yet absolutely ignores the fundamental truths of vital Christianity. Loudly, therefore, do present exigencies call for preachers who know the gospel, are able to separate the wheat from the chaff, the precious from the vile; preachers who shall be able to feed with solid nutriment the flock of God, and confound their foes by warm, living, irresistible manifestations of the truth.

Again I ask, is not such entire devotion to his specific work, as characterized the Baptist, also a needed element in the present ministry? Is not the commission specific—"Go preach the gospel?" In the solemn act of ordination are we not set apart for this distinctive work? Is not a constant concentration of all our powers essential to the faithful discharge of its perilous solemnities? True, men are needed in other spheres of toil connected with Christ's kingdom, and the King in Zion has made preparations for that necessity. Some of those positions are desirable and influential, but are any of them so high and glorious as that of preaching Christ? O! tell me, in the wide world, is there a man who occupies a sublimer moral altitude than he who, as a preacher sent from God, as was John, stands up before his fellow-men, and out of a cultured, sanctified mind, and a loving, yearning heart, proclaims to them those great truths upon which their destiny is suspended; and, as Christ's accredited ambassador, beseeches them to become reconciled to God and receive eternal redemption through the merit of atoning blood? Verily such a work is worthy of the concentrated energy and the life-long toil of any man. This view of their work made our fathers love to preach, transformed their plain pulpits into thrones, and made their ministry their crown and glory. This led them to exclaim, "Kings of the earth, keep your diadems—politicians, have your offices of emolument and power—misers, hoard your gold—worldlings, enjoy your pleasures—for us it is honor enough, glory enough, to be heralds of salvation,

proclaimers of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

And lastly, ought not that *uncompromising fidelity* which distinguished John's official life, to characterize that of every minister of the gospel? Exigencies which demand this moral element of character exist now as truly as they did then. Indeed, temptations to compromise the truth are frequent and powerful. Therefore it is, that for a preacher now to lay himself on the high altar of duty, as John did, and preach the whole truth in opposition to the prejudices, errors, and temporal interests of his hearers; to be no time-server, no tickler of the popular ear, no caterer to a vitiated public taste, no flatterer of mammon; to tear away the sanctimonious mask of hypocrisy, expose the shriveled heart of greed, hurl heaven's thunderbolts against the impiety of "macadamized bigotry," the sinfulness of oppression, and the myriad schemes of remorseless selfishness; for a preacher, I say, to do his whole duty in an age like ours, when there is so much ostentatious religion, which lifts its jeweled hands to God in professed worship, but will not stretch them forth to help suffering man; which, on set occasions, anoints its head with the oil of sanctity, but will not defile itself with the tears and blood of the poor and wretched—which makes the law of society and not the law of God its standard—fosters pride and not humility, self-conceit and not self-distrust—weaves out its own gaudy righteousness and rejects the seamless robe of Jesus—submits to no self-denial, but wallows in self-indulgence

—which hires a servant by the year, in the garb of a minister, to bear the cross of which it is ashamed, and leaves prayer meetings and Sabbath schools to be sustained by what it calls the “poorer classes,” and sits calmly by, in satin and broadcloth, surrounded by luxuries, while our institutions of learning and benevolence languish for lack of aid—which, in fact, comparatively puts a penny in the treasury of the Lord, and lavishes uncounted wealth upon itself, and demands that the ministry prophesy unto it smooth things—I say, for a preacher to do his whole duty in circumstances like these, and thus jeopardize position, reputation, influence, and perhaps even life itself, demands a heroism compared with which mere physical bravery is cowardice; a heroism which can draw its power from unseen spiritualities, yea, from the very heart of the invisible God; a heroism which, in its sublime mightiness, shall be able to gather strength from weakness, prosperity from adversity, victory from apparent defeat, hope from despair, life from death.

Friends, bear with and honor those who approximate in any good degree this lofty ideal. Sometimes they may sorely tax your patience, even offend you. Sometimes they may go directly across your cherished convictions, and arouse ghastly prejudices which lurk in your nature, perhaps unconscious to yourself. Sometimes they may put the keen knife into the very heart of your party spirit, sorely wound your pride, and sadly damage your business. Honor such men, I beseech you, for they are honest and true. They fear God and not

you; therefore, they dare to tell you the truth, seeking thereby to benefit you and glorify God. Sometimes you may think they go too far on great moral public questions; and perhaps they do—perhaps they give them undue prominence. But remember that it is an historical fact, that great moral enterprises have always been carried on by moral oscillations, at one time the truth has seemed to swing to one extreme and then to the other, and yet between these the sovereign Jehovah has steadily woven out the resplendent plan of his eternal purposes.

As I have more than implied, our representative preacher found such fidelity perilous. On account of it, he was banished from society and immured like a felon in a felon's dungeon. It cost him not merely position but life. It brought to him death in one of its most horrid forms—in the most dismal circumstances. With no friend to cheer his last mortal hour, no living voice to speak one consoling word, no sympathetic heart upon which he could lean and gather strength from its pulsations, at the gloomy midnight hour he fell beneath the murderous ax, a martyr to his fidelity. Ah, me! how many thousands since that dreadful night have sealed their testimony with their blood! O ye glorious army of martyrs, who ascended to heaven from dire dungeons and blazing stakes—the noblest inheritors of true glory are ye! Nearest the throne, amid the first outgleamings of the Godhead do ye now stand! Though despised by the world while here, ye were its noblest benefactors, and

"Never shall ye rest unsung
While Gratitude can find a tongue;
Twine, Humanity, a wreath for them
More fadeless than the diadem."

In the prosecution of substantially the same work, let us emulate their high example. What though it still be encompassed by peril, shall we shrink from it on that account, while from above the storm clouds, above the din of conflict, we hear the voice of our Leader, saying, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?" O, how we ought to adore him in view of the fact that all he requires of us is unswerving fidelity to truth, to souls, and to himself. Look at the world's heroes. What did Leonidas care for danger when, beneath the arrow-hurtled cloud of Thermopylæ, he died to save his country! What did Hannibal care for death when his armies hung like the tempests of heaven on the declivities of the Alps! What did Alexander care for it when he leaped into the Granicus with the banner of Macedon waving over his head! What did Cyrus care for it when he headed his legions at Thymbra, or fell like a thunder-bolt upon Babylon! What did Napoleon care for it when fighting like a common soldier at Lodi and Arcola! What did our fathers care for it when waging the battles of freedom, to which they had pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor! What do men of the world to-day care for it in the pursuit of gold or the pathway of ambition!

And shall we, as chosen heralds of salvation, ap-

pointed leaders of the sacramental host of God's elect, whose work and reward are so infinitely more certain and glorious, be timid and time-serving? Forbid it, O ascended and triumphant Christ, who wast thyself made perfect through suffering, and whose glorified form, amid the radiations of divinity, yet bears the scars of wounds received in thine earthly conflict !

Think you that, as the gleam of the executioner's uplifted weapon fell on him, John regretted his fidelity? or that Moses, as from Pisgah he looked back over the rugged wilderness, regretted his? or that the unnumbered host of faithful ones who were flung by ruthless persecutors from Alpine summits, murdered amid the horrors of Saint Bartholomew, slain on the storied hills of Scotland, sunk beneath the nameless horrors of the Inquisition, or met death amid the darkness and desolation of heathendom, regretted theirs? I tell you, nay; nor shall ye. Nay, when the death-hour comes—as come it will—when we shall stand on that unseen line that separates time from eternity, whence we may look back and see our pathway, through toils, tears, poverty, and, it may be, obloquy, because of our fidelity to him who “counted us faithful, putting us into the ministry;” then, as we tremble for a moment between two worlds, the gathering death-gloom shall be dissipated by the outgleamings from the beyond; and we shall hear the voice of him whom John heralded and baptized, his Lord and ours, saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” And around the sepulchres where our

dust shall sleep a weeping church shall gather and sing, while angels echo back the song, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

I can not close this discussion without calling your attention to one reflection which it suggests, viz., *that the enemies of Christianity may silence some of its heralds, but they can not hinder its progress.*

It was not hindered by the murder of this first herald. Nay, in place of this one twelve soon arose; and to these, seventy others were soon added; and shortly after, the number became an hundred and twenty, then five hundred; and at Pentecost three thousand bowed to Christ, and additions were made daily to the church; and when driven out of Jerusalem by persecution, they "went everywhere preaching the word;" and such was their success, that the number of converts during one century is believed to have reached five hundred thousand. The blood of martyrs ever since has been the seed from which Christianity has gathered her harvests of souls. She has triumphed, she shall triumph; for "the mouth of the Lord has spoken it." Her foes may be successful in single battles, but they shall be conquered in the war. The waves of her heaven-born influence, which have already dashed against the Pyramids, foamed around the Acropolis and Coliseum, flowed past the Pillars of Hercules, and mingled with the ebb of the north and the flow of the south, shall yet, "like a sea of glory, flow from pole to pole."

Triumphantly, therefore, do we say to her foes :

" Can ye drive young spring from the blossomed earth,
The earthquake still in its awful birth ?
Will the hands on time's dial, backward flee,
Or the pulse of the universe pause for thee ?
The shaken mountains, the flowers that blow,
That pulse of the universe answers—No.

" Can ye burn a truth in the martyr's fire ?
Or chain a thought in a dungeon dire ?
Or stay the soul as it soars away,
In glorious life, from its mouldering clay ?
The truth that liveth, the thoughts that go,
The spirit ascending, all answer—No.

" O error, O despots, your doom they speak,
For God is mighty as ye are weak ;
Your night and your winter from earth must roll ;
Your chains must melt from the limb and the soul.
Ye have brought us wrong, ye have brought us woe ;
Shall ye triumph for ever ? We answer—No.

" Ye have builded your altars, with gems impearled,
On the broken heart of a ruined world ;
Ye have buried its martyrs in desert graves,
Ye have made its children a race of slaves.
O'er the future age shall the ruin go ?
We gather against ye, and answer—No.

" Ye laugh in scorn from your shrines and towers,
But weak are ye, for *the truth* is ours ;
In arms, in pride, in gold ye move,
But we are stronger, our strength is *love*.
Slay truth and love, with the curse and the blow ?
The beautiful heavens, they answer—No.

"The winter night of the world is past;
The gospel's day is shining at last;
The vail is rent from the soul's clear eyes,
And prophets, and heroes, and martyrs arise;
Their words and their deeds like the thunders go:
Can ye stifle their voices? They answer—*No!*"

II.

The Sensual Man.



HEROD, The Sensual Man.

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"Now conscience wakes despair  
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory  
Of what he was, what is, and what must be  
Worse; if worse deeds, worse sufferings must ensue."—MILTON.  
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AN eminent British scholar has observed of the Bible, "This glorious book of our God, like his work of nature, abounds with almost endless variety. The amount, however, of the biographical element is very remarkable, and it not only demands special attention, but will be found to embrace within its development a large proportion of the whole circle of truth." Two things will be found true in relation to this department of Scripture, viz., the biographies are very brief, mere outlines, and they include those of bad as well as those of good men. The life of one who may unhesitatingly be classed among the former now claims our attention.

In the Bible records we read of three Herods. The first is Herod the Great—the last king of the Jews. He was the second son of Antipater, the Idumean. When only fifteen years of age, his father was appointed Procurator of Judea, and he himself was elevated to the governorship of Galilee. In the civil war which then

raged between the Cæsarean and republican parties, Herod was at first friendly to Cassius, but subsequently to Mark Antony, from whom he obtained the crown of Judea. He arose to great power in his regal position, but employed his vast influence and splendid talents in the most oppressive manner. He, without cause, murdered his beautiful wife, who was the last of the Maccabees, a family in which there had been one thousand high priests in succession. She was the last of the long and splendid line of Asmonean princes, with whose termination in her disappeared the last vestige of native royalty among the Jews, the stream of their national glory, like the mysteriously disappearing rivers of the East, vanishing for ever beneath the clod which covered Mariamne's grave. It was this Herod who, to gain favor with the Jews, rebuilt the temple. In the thirty-third year of his reign our Saviour was born. To this Herod the Wise Men came. He it was who strove to possess himself of Christ, and who issued the decree that all the male children under two years of age who were found in Bethlehem should be slain. In his sixty-eighth year, tortured by a guilty conscience, enfeebled by a broken constitution, surrounded by direful conspiracies, attacked by a deadly disease, he died a horrible death; and went to his grave amid the rejoicings of the people whom he had oppressed.

The second person of this name mentioned in the Scriptures is Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, who was born three years before Christ. He became emperor of Judea, in connection with the king-

of Chalcis, and rose to the position of one of the greatest princes in all the East. His government gave universal satisfaction to the nation, which had so lately experienced the evils of his grandfather's despotic reign. This is the Herod who, to please the Jews, put to death the Apostle James, who cast Peter into prison, and whose strange death is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts. It occurred in Cesarea, where games were being performed in honor of Claudius, and the people of Tyre and Sidon had come to sue with him for peace. On the morning of the chosen day, while the heavens were glowing with the luster of the orient, and nature in gladness smiling back a response, he appeared before them seated upon a throne; and Josephus says, "He had on a garment made wholly of silver, which, as the sun's rays illuminated it, shone so surpassingly resplendent that it spread a terror over those who looked upon him." Proudly he arose and pronounced an oration, the effect of which was overwhelming. The vast crowd was swayed to and fro with tumultuous excitement, like a wild sea lashed into surges by the breath of the storm-king, and shouted, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Majestic in his supreme selfishness, the wicked monarch greedily received this blasphemous adulation. In his own conceit he stood upon a mountain-peak of glory; but his footing was the treacherous crust which covered a volcano. For in that moment, doubtless the proudest of his life, a terrible disease, a messenger from God struck him, and from that scene of royal magnificence he was carried to his palace,

where, after five days of inexpressible suffering, eaten by worms, he expired, closing a reign of only seven years. It may interest you to know that the Agrippa before whom Paul preached was the son of this man.

Between these two, Herod Antipas, to whom I shall call your special attention, lived. He was the son of Herod the Great, and is called Tetrarch of Galilee. His brother Archelaus reigned over Judea, and bore the royal title of his father. In order to supplant him, Antipas interceded at Rome; but his covetousness met a deserved rebuke in Cæsar's confirmation of his father's will. On his way to the eternal city an event occurred which gave coloring to all his after life. He met and became enamored with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip, a woman who has justly been called the Jezebel of the New Testament. She had married her own uncle, and Salome, the famous dancing girl, was their daughter. Reciprocating Herod's criminal passion, and, in defiance of law and morality, she abandoned her husband and married the Tetrarch. The sun of Herod's fair fame, whose brightness was already dimmed by fraternal envy, sank in hopeless gloom at the perpetration of this shameless public wickedness. His own excellent but dishonored wife, the daughter of an Arabian prince, left Galilee in disgust and returned to her father's court. Such was the elevated position of this guilty pair, such the pomp and influence of their surroundings, that only one man was found who dared to rebuke them, and that was the brave and fearless John the Baptist. In the name of his God he rebuked

this guilty man and woman, the influence of whose example was so corrupting and disastrous; for society is never so much injured by malign influences existing among lower classes and working upward, as by corruption in high places which inevitably works downward. By doing this he incurred the wrath of Herod, who had before this feared his power with the people; and, what was more fearful, he drew upon himself the bitter hatred of Herodias, who in the dark depths of her guilty soul swore revenge on the virtuous denouncer of her crime. By Herod's order John was thrown into prison, and confined there during a long period, for it would seem that no opportunity occurred in which malicious vengeance dared to enforce its gratification.

The desired opportunity at length arrives. It is Herod's birth-day, and grand festivities have been ordered for its celebration. The metropolitan Tiberius is crowded with gay throngs in holiday attire. A gorgeous banquet is served in a magnificent hall of the royal palace. The lords, in their robes of state; the high captains, in their military uniforms; the elite of the nobility are there. Galilean beauty and fashion are there. Rich wine, from golden goblets, freely quaffed, has excited the guests to wild merriment. Boisterous hilarity resounds along the bannered walls. *It is Belshazzar's feast repeated.* But all is hushed as a strain of music bursts upon the ear, and the attention of the crowd is fixed upon the fair form of a beautiful girl who comes tripping into the hall, and begins to dance. The music grows quicker, wilder. Her grace-

ful but wanton movements become swifter and swifter. The excitement deepens. Every pulse beats fast. But one man of all that admiring throng applauds the loudest. It is Herod. Intoxicated, not only with wine but with delight, he is "greatly pleased," and his passion-full eyes gleam like consuming flames, while he cries aloud with an oath, "Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee, to the half of my kingdom." The dancer pauses and returns his voluptuous gaze. She is prepared with the request, because her mother, who has laid this plot to ensnare Herod into the gratification of her revenge, has previously instructed her, and she says—O, what a request to fall from the lips of a girl!—"Give me here the head of John the Baptist in a charger." Look at Herod now. A change has come over him, for he sees the plot, and sorrow is depicted on his face; but he yields. The command is given, and in a brief period the executioner returns bearing in his hands the gory charger with its ghastly contents, and delivers it to the now trembling damsel, who carries it to her mother. The imagined feelings of Salome, as she carries that fearful burden, and gives it to Herodias, have been most vividly described by Miss Lucy Hooper, one of our own sweetest poets, in the following lines

"Mother! I bring thy gift:
Take from my hand the dreadful boon—I pray,
Take it; the still, pale sorrow of the face
Hath left upon my soul its living trace,
Never to pass away.
Since from these lips, the word of idle breath,
Blanched that calm face—Oh! mother, this is death!

"What is that I see
From all the pure and settled features gleaming?
Reproach! reproach! my dreams are strange and wild.
Mother! hadst thou no pity on thy child?
See, a celestial smile seems softly beaming
On the hushed lips; my mother, canst thou brook
Longer upon thy victim's face to look?

"Alas! at yester morn
My heart was light, and to the viol's sound
I gayly danced, while crowned with summer flowers
And swiftly by me sped the flying hours;
And all was joy around—
Not death. O, mother! could I say thee nay?
Take from thy daughter's hand thy boon away.

"Take it; my heart is sad,
And the pure forehead hath an icy chill.
I dare not touch it, for avenging Heaven
Hath shuddering visions to my fancy given;
And the pale face appals me, cold and still,
With the closed lips. Oh! tell me, could I know
That the pale features of the dead were so?

"I may not turn away
From the charmed brow; and I have heard his name
Even as a prophet, by his people spoken;
And that high brow in death bears seal and token
Of one whose words were flame.
Oh! holy teacher, couldst thou rise and live,
Would not those hushed lips whisper 'I forgive?'

"Away with lute and harp—
With the glad heart for ever, and the dance!
Never again shall timbrel sound for me.
Oh, fearful mother! I have brought to thee
The silent death, with his rebuking glance,
And the crushed heart of one to whom are given
Wild dreams of judgment and offended Heaven!"

The nearest approximation to this dastardly murder I have found in history is that which a Roman historian records of Agrippina, the mother of Nero, who, to satiate her vengeance on Lollia Paulina, a hated rival, ordered an officer to bring to her Lollia's head in a dish. It was brought; and the historian says that Agrippina closely examined it, and exulted ever this horrid gratification of her revenge.

Thus John and Herod met their crisis-hour. The headless body of the former was consigned by his disciples to its humble resting-place; the carousal of the latter was interrupted only for a few moments, and the banqueting proceeded as if nothing had transpired. But unseen by the sensual eyes of his guests, around that proud form gathered clouds surcharged with wrath. Unheard amid their hilarious mirth, conscience within him muttered the echoed thunders of violated moral law. Unknown to them, his guilty imagination pictured awful portents of trouble in the future. But "judgment is not often executed speedily," and time rolls on.

The next incident recorded of this man is in connection with the history of our Lord Jesus Christ, and transpired probably within the last week of our Saviour's life. Certain Pharisees, pretending friendship, came to him with this warning: "Get thee out and depart, for Herod will kill thee." Our Lord was eminently popular among the masses of the people; and his position and influence were living condemnations of the execution of John by the Tetrarch, who had desired on this account to put him to death, but durst not,

“for he feared the people.” Cunningly, therefore, he devised this method to get rid of the Saviour and sent these men to him. Reflect upon the reply Jesus made to these messengers, for it throws a vivid light upon Herod’s character. With an air of unwonted majesty, he said : “Go, tell ye that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and do cures to-day, and to-morrow ; and the third day I shall be perfected.” The Tetrarch sent no more messages to the God-man.

There is but one reference after this to him in our Scriptures, and that is found in connection with the trial of Christ. The event referred to transpired on the morning of the day on which the Redeemer was nailed to the cross for our redemption—that day around which gathers an interest inexpressibly sublime, and which shall be remembered amid the grandeurs of eternity, when all other days shall be forgotten. On the previous night he had been apprehended in Gethsemane and taken, first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and then to Pilate, who, having ascertained that he was from Galilee, sent him to Herod, who happened then to be at Jerusalem. Look now at the word-picture which Luke has drawn of that first and last meeting of these two, whose moral natures were such perfect antagonisms. “When Herod saw Jesus he was exceedingly glad ; for he was desirous to see him for a long time ; because he had heard many things of him, and hoped to have seen some miracle wrought by him. Then he questioned him in many words, but *Jesus answered him nothing*. And the chief priests and scribes vehem-

ently accused him ; and Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate." What a scene is here exhibited ! How sharply defined its character ! how intense its action ! I dare not attempt to touch it with my poor pencil ; for surely not even a master's skill could deepen its coloring, or add to its interest. Let it stand then just as it is before your mental vision, in its divine simplicity and subduing pathos. Thus Herod's history is intertwined with that of the world's Redeemer. Thus he shamefully treated the Son of God. The record adds, that on that same day Herod and Pilate, who had before been enemies, united now in their opposition to Jesus, became friends. Josephus informs us, that under the subsequent reign of Caius, Herod was charged with treason, fell into disgrace, was stripped of his possessions, banished to Lyons, and finally into Spain, where he died, a disappointed, wretched, miserable man.

Through these recorded events let us now look for the real character of this man, who put to death, under such outrageous circumstances, the first preacher of the new dispensation ; who reigned over Galilee during the incarnation of our Lord ; the man before whose bar he was brought as a criminal, and by whose order he was mockingly arrayed in the cast-off robes of royalty, scourged, set at nought and derided. *What was his real character ?*

It has been truly observed, that although in these events "we catch but glimpses of him, still they are

sufficient to betray certain prominent and unmistakable lineaments. He is not perhaps to be styled a monster of wickedness, nor was his temper so ferocious and stern as that of his great father. He appears rather to have been of an easy and luxurious disposition, lacking in moral courage and energy; yet, when aroused by the solicitations of voluptuousness or ambition, capable of great enterprises and cruel deeds. He was not without intellectual sharpness, and some moral sense; but, on the whole, he stands as a full illustration of that class of men whose motives are of the flesh and of the world; who, jarred it may be for a moment by some serious thought, or flushed by better feelings, still live as creatures of passion, beings of an hour, and, regardless of conscience and the verities of religion, swing at impulse." As a whole, he stands before us as a representative of sensualists—men with strong animal natures, uncurbed passions, who find their highest enjoyment in the low realm of sense, and hesitate at nothing which secures them sensual gratification. Hence, you see him, deaf to the voice of morality, violate the most sacred relations of life, mocking at the highest solemnities, and in his revelings "mingling wine and blood." You see him, with all the refinement of education, dignity of position, grace of person, and splendid surroundings, wearing "the rich robes of an Epicurean, over red hands and a voluptuous heart." Moreover, in his creed he was a Sadducee, recognizing no life beyond the grave, no good higher than earthly weal. Emphatically he was not only a bad man, but a weak one. Luke refers to

"many evils he had done." Yea, doubtless, there is unrecorded in the book of history, but recorded in the book of judgment, a long, black catalogue of his crimes. And do you wonder at it? You need not, you will not, when you remember that *sensualism* was his leading characteristic.

For, rest assured, that the predominance of no other vice is so detrimental to a man's entire nature as this. It undermines the whole physical, intellectual and moral organization, as the insects of the tropics devour the substance of whatever they penetrate, leaving merely a specious shell, which crumbles into dust at the first rude blow. It weakens every power, pollutes every feeling, gives supremacy to the lowest range of our susceptibilities and capabilities, blunts the perceptions, makes evil seem good, diverts from their true direction every current of our natures, deafens the ear to every call of earth and heaven to beneficent endeavor, blinds the eye to the immortal beauty of innocence and holiness, benumbs the conscience, leads men to sneer at purity and leer in the very face of virtue, and makes them content to live merely in the degraded world of sense, strangers to the grand and holy realm of true existence. In a word, it brutalizes humanity, entails indescribable evils on the race, and damns men in both worlds. It makes their influence terribly pernicious. The character and influence of the complete sensualist have thus been described by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in the peculiar style of his powerful pen: "He lives among men hell's ambassador with full credentials; nor

can we conceive of the need of any other fiend to perfect the works of darkness while he carries his body among us, stuffed with every pestilent dreg of corruption. The heart of every virtuous young man should loathe him. If he speaks, you should as soon hear a wolf bark. Gather around you the venomous snake, the foetid vulture, the prowling hyena, and their company would be an honor to you above his; for they, at least, remain true to their own natures, while he has gone out of his, that he may become more vile than it is possible for a mere animal to be."

Three reflections are suggested by these historic facts and this character.

1. *Great positions can not make great men.*

Herod's was truly a great position. Politically, it was second only to that of the imperial Cæsar. Descended from one of the greatest monarchs of the East, he was a king in his own right, and, therefore, great honor was his, great wealth, authority and influence were his. Thus much position did for him; what did it do for that which was more important than all these—his manhood? Did it make it great? Nay, it did not, it could not. You shall search his record in vain to find any greatness, except great moral weakness, immorality, and crime, for which his sensualism prepared him, and into which it led him. Thus it ever will be with mere positions, and yet how men toil and tug to gain them. They seem to think that if they can only secure a foothold upon such eminences, their highest good will be secured. They forget that, although you

take an owl out of his dark retreat, and place him upon the loftiest height, and surround him with the blaze of noon-day, his position only makes him dizzy and blind. He is an owl still, with his big, gray eyes, and empty head; the change of position does not make an eagle of him.

The elevation that Herod occupied only made his weaknesses and crimes more conspicuous. This, high places always do for such men. I doubt not that there were times when, as the Tetrarch looked upon John, with his coat of camel's hair and leathern girdle, in his poverty and destitution, possessed of the elements of a lofty manhood, intelligence, virtue, and religion, he felt in his inmost soul that the royalty of that humble man was infinitely superior to his own. Would to God that our young men could see that there is nothing on earth so regal as a true, pure manhood—that nothing is so really great; that they would despise the miserable scramble after office that disgraces our country, and aim, not at becoming position-occupiers, mere office-holders, but cultivated, holy men, an attainment which is not dependent on the accidents of society, but upon themselves, their own energetic industry, persevering endeavor, and the promised blessing of God.

2. Circumstances can not make it right to do wrong.

The record says that when the dancing girl asked for the head of John the Baptist, Herod "was sorry." There were many reasons for this. He had felt the in-

fluence of that holy man commanding his respect; and Mark informs us that he had done many things in accordance with the Preacher's dictates, and that he enjoyed great popularity with the people. Though a characteristic sensualist, Herod's conscience was not dead, and it checked him from committing a deliberate crime as the price of a few moments' entertainment, and in order to gratify what he knew to be the ill-founded malice of his wife. Justice whispered that the object of his resentment was a righteous man, pity, that he was an helpless man, and even selfishness suggested the impolicy of a measure which might bring down upon him the indignation of his own subjects. Why, then, did he issue the fatal order? The record says that although he was sorry, "nevertheless, *for the oath's sake*," he gave the command. But did that oath justify the act? Verily, not. Doubtless, he felt bound by his oath. But was he? No. He ought not to have taken it, and when taken, such an oath could not bind him to do a palpable and flagrant wrong; for he was previously bound by *the prior obligations* of duty to society and to God not to do it; and no act of his, no single oath, nor ten thousand combined oaths, could possibly free him from those obligations. *This principle is of present and immensely practical importance*; for, in numerous instances, similar oaths have been and are being taken, involving similar moral results, but they are not, they can not be binding, under what circumstances soever of solemnity they may be taken, because they can not annihilate or ignore previous divinely-

established obligations to do right. They ought not to have been taken; but if they have been, they should be trampled under the feet of an intelligent and indignant manhood.

The same principle applies to mere *promises and resolutions*. How many persons say, "We must do so and so, or not, as the case may be: go to this or that place, or not, because we have promised." This was Herod's reasoning; but it is false. If that which you have promised to do is morally wrong, then your promise ought not to have been given; but if it has been given, it can not cancel your prior obligation to do right. This latter law is binding; the former, therefore, is not.

Observe another influential circumstance in this connection, which seems to have determined Herod's action, even if there was any hesitancy in his mind with regard to the binding character of his oath. The record says, that although he was sorry, "nevertheless, for the oath's sake, and *them which sat with him at meat*," he issued the requested order. The fair inference from this is, that he was afraid of his reputation for firmness and decision of character among his guests; that he feared lest he might betray to them weakness of purpose, and lack of courage to fulfill his own promise. Thus his moral constitution, enfeebled by sensuality, yielded to the temptation to commit obvious wickedness, because it had not courage to brave a corrupt public sentiment; and foolishly endeavored to persuade itself that circumstances justified it.

Now, this very thing is the cause of the downfall of many a noble young man. He finds himself in a circle of corrupt companions, and soon becomes fearful of their sneers, afraid of being called by them mean and cowardly; and gradually yields to this influence, until, in opposition to the reproaches of his conscience and the dictates of his better judgment, he finds himself doing what crimson his cheek in moments of reflection, and plants thorns in his night-pillow. His own heart tells him that he is a coward, in not daring to brave the corrupt influence of those who "set with him at meat." And do you know that this very thing is the secret of what are called "laws of honor," the foundation of the practice of dueling? Look at society where that fearful custom is in vogue, and you will see that it exists because a barbarous public sentiment demands it; because if a man will not fight he is branded as a poltroon and a coward, banished from certain circles where he has lost caste; and because men have not the moral courage to brave these social consequences, that horrid code, which combines unmanly meanness, daring impiety, fiendish malignity; and which has robbed the country of some of her noblest citizens, and overwhelmed untimely widows and orphans with inexpressible grief, is perpetuated. To return to my point, I affirm, in view of this discussion, with increased emphasis, that no circumstances, neither oaths nor public opinion, can make it right to do wrong!

3. *Although a man may violate his conscience,*

and stifle it for a time, still, sooner or later, it will rack his soul with remorse.

The case before us clearly illustrates this. Review it once more. Herod has had John slain. He is troubled no more with his faithful rebukes. His pride is stung no longer with his public denunciations, for the lips that uttered them are silent in death. The guilty Herodias has lavished her passionate thanks upon him for the deed. Fawning courtiers have applauded his fidelity to his oath, and his firmness in fulfilling his promise. Sometimes he has almost argued himself into the belief that the fearful deed was, after all, justifiable under the circumstances. Apparently, his temporary regret was drowned in the revelry by which it was surrounded. But how was it with his conscience? Ah! a few words reveal a volume in regard to it. They tell us that, months afterwards, when the fame of Jesus reached Herod amid the splendors of his court, he exclaimed, in wild terror, "This is John; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." Those few words lay bare the secret of his soul. See how, amid all his sensualism, that direful deed is retained by his memory, and his benumbed conscience finally aroused itself, despite his professed denial of the resurrection of the dead. Like a weird specter it has haunted his dreams, and now, upon receiving this intelligence, it starts forth in vivid form, searing the eyeballs of his guilty imagination, and he shrieks, "This is John." Ah! to him now "every beam in the ceilings of his

gorgeous palace seems to utter a groan and the pictured walls to break out with ghastly sweat." .

The Greeks and Romans believed that the terror resident in the mind after crime was the direct production of a malignant being, who was ever present with the criminal; and surely the embodiment of an accusing conscience would present a livid form, glowing with the fire of evil power within, and wrapped about with somber shadows as with a garment.

Friends, conscience is an integral part of our moral constitution; and however wrongly educated, it is always more or less true to the high purposes of its creation. Hence every man has some faith in immortality.

All history confirms the truth of the poet's declaration,

"Conscience, tremendous conscience, in his fits
Of inspiration—whensoever it came—
Rose like a ghost, inflicting fear of death
On those who feared not death in fiercest battle,
And mocked them in their martyrdoms of torment;
That secret, swift, and silent messenger
Broke on them in their lonely hours: in sleep,
In sickness: haunting them with dire suspicions
Of something in themselves that would not die;
Of an existence elsewhere, and hereafter,
Of which tradition was not wholly silent,
Yet spake not out; its dreary oracles
Confounded superstition to conceive,
And baffled skepticism to reject.
What fear of death is like the fear beyond it?"

After the commission of crime and a life of sensuality, men may pretend to laugh at thoughts of the

great hereafter. They have sinned with impunity. Civil law has not condemned them: public opinion may not have reproached them. They have flourished like green bay trees. But sooner or later, their abused moral natures will writhe beneath their load of accumulated guilt. They will conjure up from the past, images of terror, and throw over wicked pleasures and ill-gotten possessions lurid gleams bright as hot rays from a burning hell. Conscience will cause ghostly forms of woe to rise up in the awful future and beckon them onward, and hideous memories from the past to push them forward. It will make despair mock them, sleep fly from them in terror, agony press her bitter cup to their lips, and remorse strike her sharpened teeth into the very center of their being.

Remember this, ye who glory in your shame—who violate with impious daring the laws of God and man! Remember that should these terrible consequences not overtake you in the present life, you may rest assured, in the words of another, that when Time, having held in trust for eternity the bliss and bitterness of earth, shall render up his dreadful seal; when invading ruin shall go abroad on this theater of crime; when the grave, the sepulchre, the sea, the desert, amid the convulsions of expiring nature, shall yield up their dead; when earth, air, fire, and ocean shall blend their energies for the final struggle, and the dash of ruined systems shall burst on the ear of surrounding solitudes, as the funeral dirge of a dying world; then, O then

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ye shall stand before the judgment throne of immaculate purity, and hear from the lips of him whom Herod mocked, and ye despise, the irrevocable sentence—doom—"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."



III.

The Impulsive Man.



PETER.

The Impulsive Man.

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"In the hour of trial, Jesus pray for me,  
Lest by base denial I dishonor thee.  
When thou seest me waver, with a look recall,  
Nor for fear or favor suffer me to fall.

"With its vain allurements would this gay world charm,  
With its strong seductions strive to work me harm?  
Bring to my remembrance sad Gethsemane,  
Or in sadder semblance cross-crowned Calvary."—MONTGOMERY.

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THE distinctive peculiarities of individuals have been made the subject of various classifications. There are two of these to which I will briefly advert, which if not of the highest order are certainly very expressive. If you observe closely the common language of men, you will discover that at times they classify each other's predominating characteristics according to the animals. Hence you hear of apish men, mere imitators; foxy men, cunning and deceitful; wolfish men, insatiable in their greed; tiger-like men, fierce and cruel; and lion-hearted men, bold and fearless.

The other classification to which I refer is according to the metals. Adopting this, and looking over society, you may see iron men, strong and useful; steel men, springy and elastic; mercurial men, hasty and impetu-

ous; silver men, brightly polished; golden men, pure and true; and then you find others, of whom even charity itself must confess that they have by far too much brass in their composition.

But whatever classification we may adopt, it still remains true that, in its essential features, as truly as in its original faculties, human nature is evermore the same. The men of past centuries are the men of to-day, with only what difference circumstances and culture have wrought. Indeed, history could not teach us by example, unless the groundwork of character were in all ages the same. And when we comprehend this, history is no longer an obsolete legend, or an amusing story, but a grand mirror revealing the action of our own passions, the conflicts of our own virtues and vices, and sometimes the reflections of our own interior life, the outworkings of its secret impulses and half-formed purposes. Especially is this true of gospel history. For while, in general history, we chiefly see human nature amid institutions and forms which have ceased to exist, in this we see it in contact with Christianity operating in Palestine then, as among ourselves now. You perceive, therefore, that not only is the groundwork of character the same now as then, but the great operating agency is the same, and we shall find in our investigations that these men of the first century are in their relations to the gospel true representatives of the men of the nineteenth century. As we have seen that there are now men of whom Herod and John the Baptist are types, so we shall see that there are

not a few of whom Peter—the subject of this lecture—is the true representative.

Reflect for a moment at the outset *on the positional eminence* his name holds in the world at the present time, although eighteen hundred years have elapsed since his decease. The greatest building on earth, greatest in the scope of its architecture, the extent of its capacity, the wealth of its decorations, upon which the highest art has exhausted its energies, now bears his name; it is called “St. Peter’s Cathedral.” The very throne of the Cæsars has been displaced by what is termed “the Chair of St. Peter.” The proud column which was erected to commemorate the triumphs of the imperial Trajan, is known in modern Rome only as “the Pillar of St. Peter.” More than this. The Romish church, with its millions of adherents, claim him as their foundation. And wherever a scriptural Christianity is known, his name is honored and revered. Let us go back over the pathway of centuries, and look for the origin of this man, with the present extent and nature of whose fame that of Cæsar or Alexander seems limited indeed, and briefly trace *the outline facts of his life*.

Thus retrogressing, we arrive at the memorable sea of Galilee. Near to its northern shore is a small town called Bethsaida. This is his birth-place. Look around and you see a little village occupied chiefly by fishermen. The fishermen of Galilee were generally rude, fighting, swearing men, and there is no reason to believe that Peter was better than his companions. The name of only one of his parents is known. The time

of his birth is unknown; but it is supposed to have been at about the same period as that of our Lord. The name of only one other member of the family is given us—that of Andrew, a younger brother. At this period Peter is in the fresh bloom of manhood. He has done what every young man ought to do — married, and settled down in an honest occupation. Tradition describes him as tall, strong-limbed, high-browed, with piercing, black, restless eyes, slightly aquiline nose, flexible lips, manly in his bearing and rapid in action. Think, now, of this fisherman quietly pursuing his humble occupation on the clear waters of his native lake. He is uneducated and unambitious. Ah! amid his thoughtful hours have any foretokens of the greatness of the change which shall come over him, the loftiness of the destiny that awaits him, visited the day or night dreams of this fisherman? Has there been a growing disquietude, in his once peaceful soul, with his present occupation, and a deepening impression of a higher destiny, somehow awaiting him in the future, like the vague, uncertain sensations which crowd a sleeper's mind, when the rays of the rising sun first fall upon his unconscious lids? See what occurs. His brother Andrew goes southward—hears John the Baptist preach—is converted—is present at the baptism of Christ—hears John proclaim him to be the Messiah—with another follows Jesus, and asks, “Rabbi, where dwellest thou?” The kind answer is, “Come and see;” they go and abide with him a day. Then the happy Andrew hastens back to Bethsaida, his soul filled with

the rapture of a convert's first love—finds his brother Simon, and with eyes glistening with joyful tears he exclaims, "We have found the Christ." Grand intelligence is this to Simon's Jewish ears and heart! And beautiful is the sight, as the younger brother, taking the elder by the arm, leads him to Jesus! And astonished is the wondering Simon, as the Messiah looks kindly upon him, and says, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jonah; thou shalt be called Cephas," which is a Syriac word signifying "a stone;" the Greek of which is "Πετρος," the English, "Peter." We are now at the crisis period of this man's history. He not only has a new name, but he feels within him new emotions, new desires, new hopes, the fresh-born struggles of a new life. He returns to Bethsaida; but the charms of his native home, lake, and business, are gone. His expanded soul overleaps these barriers, and stretches forth toward a higher sphere. He expects daily to be summoned by the Messiah to the grand work of delivering Israel; but the summons does not come, and reluctantly he returns to his old occupation. This is in the thirtieth year of the Christian era. At the end of the year, the brothers, as usual, are fishing. As they are about to cast their nets into the lake, they behold, to their surprise, Jesus standing upon the shore, and hear him say, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They drop their nets, and, though dependent for their subsistence on their daily toil, leave them instantly to obey the high behest, and follow him, the spiritual nature of whose sublime work they do not yet

comprehend. Remember, Christ's home was at Capernaum, the other side of the lake. Thither Peter removed with his family, and became his constant and faithful attendant.

Let us now link together more closely the chain of succeeding events in Peter's history.

The next occurrence of interest was when, a great crowd having collected on the lake shore to hear the Saviour preach, He entered Peter's boat, bade him push off from the shore, directing them to throw their nets on the "right side of the vessel." Peter was amazed at the success attending the Saviour's direction, for they had previously "toiled all night and caught nothing." Here we have the first recorded development of his spiritual life, when he said, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Then follow, in rapid succession, his connection with the final enrollment of the twelve Apostles; the division of the twelve into couples, and their endowment with miraculous power; after which Peter took his first preaching tour through Galilee. Immediately afterwards transpired, upon the lake and its shore, many grand scenes which our limits will not allow me to describe. These were succeeded by that memorable event which transpired near Cesarea Philippi, where Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I am?" You remember the reply of the other disciples. You remember Peter's noble response. You also remember the Saviour's response and benediction upon Peter. Then followed that series of events and teachings whereby Peter's

Jewish hopes and prospects were blasted ; the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, at which he was present with James and John ; the transaction of the tribute money ; the decision of the question of superiority, and the final journey of Christ to Jerusalem.

In quick succession followed the final events. The institution of the supper ; the solemn warning ; the Gethsemane scene ; the cutting off of the servant's ear ; Peter's threefold denial of his Master ; his repentance ; his presence at the sepulchre on the resurrection morning ; the last interview on the lake shore, when Christ thrice asked him, " Lovest thou me ?" the Pentecostal sermon ; his arraignment and subsequent imprisonment ; his release from prison ; his first sermon to the Gentiles ; his rendering an account of his labors to the church at Jerusalem ; his denunciation of Ananias and Sapphira ; his mission to Samaria ; his visit to all the churches ; the writing of his general epistles ; his presence at the first council at Jerusalem ; his subsequent journeys through Asia Minor ; and, finally, his death by martyrdom in a good old age.

You have now before you the links in the chain of Peter's life drawn together as closely as possible, in connection with an idea at least of his personal appearance. You thus see the outside of this man's person and life. Bear with me now while I attempt to analyze and develop the elements and action of his interior life, by which analysis we shall discover three points of practical interest. This is all I have time to do. Passing by all discussions as to his general relations to the king-

dom, involved in the Romish controversy, I must look at him now only as a man, a representative man.

1. *We find in him a peculiar type of human character.* What are its elements?

Before I speak of these, I must beg you to remember a fact which is rarely thought of in connection with Peter, viz., that, in the popular acceptation of the term, *he was uneducated*. He never had the advantage of school-learning, as Paul had. He was a rough, uncultured fisherman of Galilee, a stranger alike to the refining influence of literature and polite society. You must not be surprised therefore to find him sometimes rude in speech and rough in manners; uncut, unpolished, but still a diamond.

In him you see *immense strength of impulse*.

This was the natural basic element, whose restless energy gave force, and sometimes impetuosity, to his actions. Of these there are innumerable examples. His impulses were not only *strong* but *quick*. On this account it was not safe for him to carry a sword. We never read of his having one but on a single occasion, and then he did mischief with it. It was when the band of soldiers came to apprehend Christ in the garden. It so happened that a servant of the high priest followed in their train. The poor fellow had done nothing; but Peter feeling, in the mightiness of his indignation, that he must do something, and not daring to attack all the soldiers alone, made a desperate thrust, and cut off the man's ear. His impulses often led him into embarrassing positions, and yet they were

the mighty force of his natural manhood. They made him an emphatic man. Even his sins had a terrible emphasis in them. There were crowded into the space of an hour, lies, curses, and oaths. He was of the same cast of character as Mirabeau, the terrible author of the horrors of the French Revolution. "The cometary powers" of the one, however, were harmonized and subdued by "the solar center" of the religion of Jesus Christ. The other, destitute of its influence, traversed his ellipse of crime with an audacity startling even to the licentious age in which he lived, and rushed headlong into the ruin that he brought upon himself.

Large and warm-heartedness was another characteristic. His life abounds with evidences of this. Perhaps its finest development is found in connection with the institution of the Supper—when, to teach them a lesson of humility, the Saviour washed the disciples' feet. Having in turn come to Peter, he stepped back, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Mildly Jesus answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." "Oh, then," said Peter, "Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head." And how the great, though self-confident heart showed itself when in all sincerity he said, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I—I will go with thee to prison and to death!" Of what other disciple are tears recorded? He never manifested the ambition of John and James, the cupidity of Judas, or the skepticism of Thomas; but his whole life was permeated with a noble generosity and keen sympathy.

Moreover, he possessed the elements of *constitutional firmness*. At first you may doubt this. You remember evidences of cowardice and unmanly shrinking from danger, in his life. Those we shall presently examine. Suffice it now that Jesus called him Cephas or Πέτρος—the man of rock—thus denoting the natural solidity and strength of his character. Must there not have been a fitness in this name? But, you say, how could the wavering disciple be compared to a rock? I beg you to remember that a rock will tremble—sway to and fro with almost every wind unless based upon a sufficient foundation. There are amid the Alps huge masses of granite balanced upon such slender natural bases that a man's hand can move them, or the tread of a chamois dislodge, and hurl them thundering into the vale below. And until Peter rested upon the true foundation, he rocked and was dislodged. But the strength of his will was developed in the very greatness of its impulsive movements. When, however, he settled down on the broad basis of an accepted atonement, a risen Christ and a deeper personal experience of Christianity, he became firm as a mountain-bedded rock. To change the figure, he was like a lever, an instrument of great power, but useless without its fulcrum. His energy, therefore, toiled in the vanity of self-reliance until, in the finished work of Christ, he found his moral fulcrum, and resting on that point, with his energy for the long arm, and his impulsiveness for the power, he moved the world. This is a rare combination. You rarely find a man possessed of

great strength of impulse, great capacity of heart, together with rocky firmness.

These qualified him to be the executive man of the Apostleship—the spokesman, the business leader. *Such are always men of mark.* You will find them in every congregation and community, the active, leading spirits. Sometimes they run against snags, *but they will run.* Sometimes they say bad words, use harsh and ugly expressions, *but they must talk.* Sometimes they do very bad things, *but they will act.* They are emphatically living men, and if a “living dog is better than a dead lion,” then, one such man with all his faults is worth more to any enterprise than fifty inactive, stolid, over-cautious men, who never do wrong simply because they never do any thing; who go through society with their hands behind their backs, managing so as never to come in contact with any person or thing; who are mere ballast in the ship of church or state, who never stand at the helm or climb the masts when wild storms rage, or repel a boarding foe at the risk of their lives.

All that men of this fiery, impetuous, but strong stamp need, is just what Peter needed—a true foundation, a deeply experimental acquaintance with Christ. Only let them have this, let their impulses be directed, their hearts purified by supreme love to Christ; let their firmness be based on Christian principle, and they become the most useful men in church or state. They will bear the heaviest burdens, toil the longest and the hardest. They are the men who lead mighty enter-

prises. They are the pioneers of the race. They give the world its greatest moral projections. They fight the battles of humanity and religion. Let us thank God then for this type of character; these restless, impetuous, fiery Peters, who make things move wherever they go; who afford the motive power which puts in action the whole machinery of society; who stir up the sluggish elements of community, sometimes by bluster, sometimes by argument, but stir them up somehow; who, if they are always the first to speak, are also the first to act; who, whatever their other faults, are outspoken, above-board men, despisers of low cunning or intrigue, who will say to your face what they have against you, and never stab you in the dark.

2. *We have in this history not only a type, but a trial of character.*

To develop this, let me picture to you a scene. It opens in an upper room at Jerusalem, where Jesus and his disciples have just concluded the institution of the Supper. Mournfully turning to them, he says, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night." Sadly the other disciples bow their heads in silence, but Peter, starting up, says, "Though all men should be offended, yet will not I." Calmly Jesus says, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Excited to vehemence, this impulsive man, standing proudly erect, exclaims, "If I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Ah, Peter, Peter! before the morning's dawn thy proud head shall be bowed in shame; thy generous but self-trusting heart shall writhe in speechless agony!

Sadly the little band retire to Gethsemane. There, while Jesus prays, Peter falls asleep. Touching indeed is the rebuke, "What! couldst thou not watch with me one hour?" The armed band come. Jesus is apprehended and taken to the house of the High Priest. Most of the disciples flee, but Peter follows afar off, and finally steals his way into the very hall where the trial is going on, and, to avoid recognition, mingles with the servants. But suspicious eyes are upon him, and a servant girl says, pointing to him, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Quick as lightning he denies it. Suspicion is silenced, but not satisfied. By and by another says to him, "Surely, thou art one of them;" and lo, with an oath he affirms, "I know not the man." Finally a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off asks, "Did I not see thee with him in the garden?" Covered with confusion and embarrassment, his early habit of swearing, when a Galilean fisherman, comes back on him, and with curses and oaths he affirms, "I know not the man." The last word is hardly out of his mouth when the loud morning crow of the cock is heard. Others notice it not, but to the ear of this fallen disciple it sounds like the knell of doom. Not the crashing thunder, heralding the flaming thunderbolts of wrath; not the roaring tempest, sounding its awful dirge around an ill-fated ship; not the last toll of the bell which summons the prisoner to execution, are so appalling as that sound in Peter's ears, awakening, as it does, the forgotten warning of his Master. But Jesus has

turned towards the fallen man. Behold his face as he looks upon him. It is not wreathed with wrath. No lightning glances of indignation flash from those bright eyes. Nay; pity, kind remembrance, unutterable tenderness mingle with rebuke. He speaks no word; he will not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." His look has broken Peter's heart. See! he leaves the hall, goes out, and weeps bitterly and long. There he stands, in yon lonely place, his manly form shaking with grief, like an oak in a tempest.

This was Peter's great trial. And thus his impulsive self-confidence proved itself a broken reed. True, there are palliations for his conduct. When Christ was arrested, he doubtless thought the whole enterprise a failure. His guilt was unpremeditated, but, after all, it was enormous. And how clearly this illustrates the trial and fall of many professors of religion since Peter's day, who have had more confidence in themselves than in Christ. At one point in their life you tell them that there is danger of their leaving their duty and Christ, but they do not realize it. Tell one such that yonder is a man who was once a professor of religion, but is now a rum-drinker, a sabbath-breaker, a ridiculer, a scoffer at divine things, and he says—in all sincerity, too—I will never disgrace my religion, I will never break my vows, never leave my Saviour. He says to the church, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." Time passes away. He begins to follow Jesus afar off. He neglects one duty, then another. His place in the

weekly prayer meeting becomes vacant. He is seen in the sanctuary, at first but once a day, then less frequently still. His profession has become a restraint, a burden to him. Gradually he drops it entirely, and mingles with the world, the gayest of the gay. Now, instead of being at the communion table, he is found at the saloon-bar. Instead of being at the prayer meeting, you find him amid circles of godless pleasure. As truly as Peter did, he says, "I know not the man." Once in a while a worldling will say to him, "Did I not see thee with him in the church? Did I not hear you speak and pray in the Christian's meeting?" O Christian young man, heed the warning of this example! Rely not upon the strength of your own resolutions to keep you. They are to temptations only what cobwebs are to whirlwinds. Dream not that in your own strength, without the aid of all the means of grace, you can breast successfully the current of worldliness which sweeps souls away from God and heaven! Your strength, compared to that force, is only as a feeble oar against a Niagara flood! "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Let the beautiful hymn of Montgomery be ours:

"In the hour of trial, Jesus, pray for me,
Lest by base denial I dishonor thee;
When thou seest me wander, with a look recall
Nor for fear or favor suffer me to fall.

"With its vain allurements would this gay world charm,
With its strong seductions strive to work me harm?
Bring to my remembrance sad Gethsemane,
Or, in sadder semblance, cross-crowned Calvary."

Friend, hast thou fallen? Despair not; Jesus loves thee still. He looks on thee with pitying eye, even as he looked on Peter, and beckons thee again to his sheltering bosom. Go to him in penitence and faith, and Peter's reception shall be thine.

3. There is presented in this history, moreover, not only an interesting type of general character, a trial of self-confident character, but a beautiful exhibition of *the progressive growth* of a truly Christian character. Although in an evil hour Peter fell, through the misguided power of his great impulses, yet, by the grace of God, he arose again, because he was neither a hypocrite nor an apostate, but an undeveloped Christian. The "root of the matter" was in him. His repentance, unlike that of Judas, was of "a godly sort." It led to Christ, and, therefore, to hope and restoration. The proof of this is seen in the fact that, by the command of Jesus, the resurrection was announced to him especially. "Go tell my disciples and Peter," were the words of the risen Lord to Mary. And when he was restored, how beautifully his incipient Christianity developed itself. His undue self-confidence was gone. His impulses were rightly directed. He never forgot his fall; and it is said of him that whenever, in after life, he heard a cock crow he burst into tears. Look at the facts of his subsequent history—the high honors conferred on him by the great Head of the church, the manifestation of a courageous martyr spirit, which trembled not before stripes, bonds, imprisonment, and death itself. Behold him at Pentecost standing at the

head of the apostolic band, interpreting the spiritual import of the strange phenomena the crowds at Jerusalem witnessed, demonstrating with irresistible power the Messiahship of Jesus and the consequent divinity of Christianity, charging home upon the Jews with awful power the murder of their own Christ, and proclaiming in joyful tones, on the basis of the atonement, hope for the despairing, pardon for the guilty, redemption for the lost, with such success that three thousand men and women are converted under that single sermon. Behold him the first imprisoned apostle, the first to proclaim to the world that Christians will obey God rather than men, the first to inflict miraculous judgments on deceivers, and the first speaker in the first Christian council at Jerusalem. Behold him at Joppa, when his remaining Jewish prejudices were rebuked and removed by a vision from heaven, and at Cesarea opening to Cornelius, the Italian centurion, the doors of that kingdom which has thrown the historic glory of Roman sway into the shade, and long since exalted the dove of peace above the eagle of worldly dominion. I say, behold him thus, and you see in one representative man combined, the Chrysostom, Luther and Whitefield of his day—the great light of the apostolic age preceding the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. And in old age you see his whole nature softened and sublimated into a glorious manhood.

How much Christianity did for him ! Think of him as he was when it found him, on the lake of Galilee, a rough, swearing, uncultivated fisherman, and then

as he was when he wrote, after a long life of usefulness, those epistles which bear his name, which are so full of yearning tenderness, evangelical doctrine, practical admonition, burning love to Christ, and where gravity, polish, dignity and grace distinguish every line. What maturity of experience, manly power and ripeness of charity and piety they develop, blending as they do the fervor of devotion, with the calmness of the wisdom of an experience gathered through long years of vicissitudes.

Tradition says that he was finally crucified, and that he was nailed to a cross with his head downward, at his own request, in consequence of his conscious unworthiness to die in the position, although by the same means, as did his Lord. Whether this be truthful or mythical, it equally illustrates that profound humility which is a leading characteristic of ripened piety.

Let us learn hence what experimental piety can do for human nature. It may have small beginnings. There may be at first only the blade, but in beautiful succession, under the varied disciplinary processes of grace, shall appear "the ear, and then the full corn in the ear."

Tenderly affecting, my brethren, is that gracious, loving sovereignty which, as in Peter's case, overrules even our own infirmities and actual sins, so as to make them conduce oftentimes in the highest degree to the sanctification of our natures, and our growth up into the full stature of men in Christ Jesus.

“Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”



IV.

The Avaricious Man.



JUDAS,
The Avaricious Man.

~~~~~  
"Gold, gold, gold, gold,  
Bright and yellow, hard and cold;  
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled.  
Hard to get and light to hold;  
Hoarded and battered, bought and sold;  
Stolen, squandered, borrowed, doled,  
Spurned by the young, hugged by the old  
To the very verge of the church-yard mould;  
Price of many a crime untold—  
Gold, gold, gold, gold."

~~~~~

IN an oration by Everett, which has long since become an American classic, you will doubtless remember that, having described the landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, November 9, 1620, their weariness after a five months' voyage, their destitution and dangers, he asks these questions: "Shut now the volume of history, and tell me, on any principle of human probability, what shall be the fate of this handful of adventurers? Tell me, man of military science, in how many months were they all swept off by the thirty savage tribes enumerated within the early limits of New England? Tell me, politician, how long did this shadow of a colony, on which your conventions and treaties had never smiled, languish on the distant coast?"

Student of history, compare for me the baffled projects, the deserted settlements, the abandoned adventures of other times, and find the parallel of this?"

Then, after a fine rhetorical pause, he shows how wonderfully, in opposition to all human probability, to all scientific and historical calculations, *success* crowned their efforts.

Now this is not only brilliant rhetoric, it is as true as it is eloquent; but can no parallel BE found? Can not the student of history find a record, whose glory even surpasses this? Let us see. Some eighteen hundred years ago, in distant Asia, at Jerusalem, there was a company of men who, like our fathers, embarked their all in an enterprise. *What was it?* Not to secure for themselves or their descendants an earthly home, not to provide an asylum for mere liberty, not to subject a portion of one continent to their principles. Nay, it was deeper, broader, grander than this. Its design was to overturn all existing religions, and subdue the entire world to the allegiance of Christianity. Our fathers were cultured men; they clearly understood the nature and principles of their enterprise, for those principles were in them the culmination of centuries of growth. These were unlettered men, who but poorly comprehended the high spirituality of their work, its means and ultimate purposes. Great obstacles, indeed, were in our fathers' way; but against these men were opposed the all-subduing Roman power, with its stern law and order; the generally prevailing Greek civilization, with its science and art; both combining to

strengthen the idolatry which girdled the globe; the power of ancient Judaism; and superadded, the settled opposition of depravity in all human hearts.

Of the Pilgrims there were one hundred persons, all good and true. Of these, there were only twelve, and of this little company, *one was A TRAITOR.*

With an emphasis stronger than that of the eloquent Everett, adopting his words, I say, "Shut the volume of history, and tell me, on any principle of probability, what shall be the fate of this enterprise? How soon will it be blasted, crushed in its very incipency by these coöperating antagonisms? Was it not more probable that the Pilgrim fathers would succeed than they?" But open that volume, and behold that enterprise triumphant over all these elements of opposition; guiding to-day the footsteps of progress on every continent, and permeating the civilization of the races, as well as by its higher spiritual ministries pouring light and love into a world of human souls.

This fact, I submit to you, can not be accounted for on any other theory than that which admits the divinity of Christianity, the presence of the God-man with these twelve men, whose power was magnified in their weakness, whose wisdom called to this work just *the men needed*; whose providence did for them, that which no earthly force could have effected.

Just here, a question arises, which I can not put aside if I would. I wonder whether it has ever arisen in your minds, and troubled you as it has me! *It is this: Why did our Lord call to this work such a*

man as Judas Iscariot, from whose character we instinctively recoil?

Implicit faith accepts the fact, and leaves it to the wisdom of one who was too wise to err. But still, for myself, I can not help asking, Why did he do it? Limiting the number of his original disciples to twelve, and so much depending on their personal character in the first stages of the work, why did he select so perfidious a man to be one of that twelve? It certainly *was not through ignorance of what he was*, for it is clear that "*he knew from the beginning who would betray him.*" He was never deceived by Judas; from the first he saw beneath that bland exterior a heart as cold as steel, and hard as stone.

I have time now merely to state the answer to this question, which to my mind is most satisfactory.

Was it not important to furnish to the world, the testimony of an enemy to the purity of the private character, of the founder of Christianity? Had all of his intimate associates been friends, might there not have been ground, at least, for the suspicion that their partiality for him had led them to conceal what, if known, would have marred that character in the view of a scrutinizing world? Might it not have been averred by infidelity, with some show of reason too, that if one of the twelve, who knew him thoroughly, only had possessed the courage to turn traitor, had there been a spy in that little camp who could have revealed all of its secrets, the fair fame of Jesus of Nazareth might have been blasted?

But see how the possibility of such an averment, with its long train of consequences, is for ever made impossible by the testimony of Judas. He was cognizant of Christ's private life. He knew all Jesus said and did, his plans, and the method of their execution. Had there been the slightest deviation from immaculate rectitude, the keen eye of the false disciple had seen it, and an exigency arrived, when, in justification of his treachery, he would gladly have heralded it. But when his crime was committed, and his guilty soul began to quiver with remorse; when he had every temptation to reveal any thing he knew against Jesus, in order to soothe his own spirit and lessen the odium which he knew awaited him, did he make any such declaration? Nay, nay, with terrible desperation he threw down the price of his iniquity, and in accents of despair, so bitter in their hopeless anguish that they startled the participants of his guilt, he cried, "*I have betrayed innocent blood!*" Then the fundamental question, as to the purity of the life of Christ was for ever put to rest.

I will next sketch to you *the biography of Judas.*

Nothing is recorded of his birthplace, education, employment, or even his lineage, except this single line, "*he was the son of Simon.*" Of which, the record does not say, although some seven are alluded to in the New Testament. Nor are we informed as to the circumstances connected with his being numbered with the disciples; but in the first record of him we find him occupying the office of treasurer of this real *brotherhood of Jesus.* And after the statement of that

fact not much is said of him; the writers, however, as is their wont, by a few unstudied master-strokes, sketch a character of marked individuality, which stands out in bold, dark relief on the sacred page. He is next presented in the picture of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand on the lake shore, where, you will recollect, the people were delighted with the miracle-worker. The loaves were good, the fishes were good, and, what was better, they cost nothing. But when he proclaimed the searching spiritualities of his religion they were displeased and turned away by thousands. Mournfully then Jesus turned to his disciples with the question, Will ye also go away? And nobly Peter responded, "*Lord, to whom shall we go—for thou alone hast the words of everlasting life?*" And then and there, in the first year of his public work, Jesus gazed upon the band and said, "*Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?*"—an adversary. True, he did not mention any name; but *one* man in that little group knew who was meant, and Jesus wished him to know the fact that he was known, for sure he was that on no ears, even in that vast crowd, had the stern spiritualism of his gospel fallen more unwelcomely, than upon those of the money-loving treasurer. In the record of the two intervening years no allusion is made to Judas; but, in the account of the last week of our Lord's life, he again appears on the historic scene as a prominent actor.

Bear in mind that the exceeding popularity of Christ with the masses of the people in Jerusalem, had

aroused against him a powerful combination of powerful foes. The high dignitaries, uniting the legal, literary, and Judaistic influences of the Holy City, strengthened by their positions, wealth, and influence, at last resolved, at all hazards, to put down this excitement, by putting away this Nazarene, who, without a single element of their influence, had shaken their ancient dominion to its foundations, and was hailed by the masses as their friend and leader. They feel that instantaneous and energetic action is demanded, and therefore a secret council is held at the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest, where, after consultation, three resolutions are passed :

That Christ shall be put to death. That they will take him by craft. That this shall not be done on a feast-day, for fear of the people.

This state of things is known to only two of the little band—Jesus and Judas. To avoid being taken by craft, until his time was come, Jesus remains in the city only during the day-time, and each evening goes over to Bethany, and spends the night there.

And here a social picture is presented to us. Our Lord and his disciples are supping at the house of Simon, and while reclining at the meal, the door opens, and Mary, the sister of Lazarus, enters with a box of ointment, kneels, and anoints the Saviour's feet, and wipes them with the tresses of her beautiful hair. The room is filled with the delicate perfume. All appreciate the womanly delicacy of this expression of grateful love except one, and that is Judas. He looks upon her

with lowering brow, and takes this occasion to vent his growing disaffection by exclaiming, "To what purpose is this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" How this coarse utterance of his sordid soul jars upon the harmony of this delightful scene! How thin a covering is this for his mean avarice! For the record adds, "He said this not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and carried the bag, and used to take what was put therein."

Hear the response of Christ. How gratefully it falls upon the ears of the shrinking Mary: "Let her alone, for she hath anointed me for my burial. The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always."

That reply blasts the last hope of Judas that Christ is to set up an earthly kingdom, and stinging under this public rebuke, his resolve is taken, and on this very night he goes to the priests with the infamous proposition, "What will ye give me, and I will betray him unto you?"

They hear him with fiendish joy. Here is an ally from a quarter whence they had not dreamed of receiving aid. The price—thirty pieces of silver—is agreed on, the bargain is struck, and Judas returns to the disciples, and waits for an opportunity of fulfilling his part of the infamous contract. No opportunity occurs, however, until the following Thursday night.

Touchingly affecting is the scene which opens before us now, in the upper room, where, after celebrating the

Passover, Jesus instituted the Supper. Never hath his spirit been so yearningly tender. He knows that his last hour is at hand. He knows that ere the shades of another night shall gloom the world, his body, pale, gory, dead, shall press the cold floor of the sepulchre. He knows that his betrayer sits at that table with him. Sadly he says, "Ye are clean, but not all. He that eateth with me hath lifted up his heel against me." A pause ensues. Then he adds, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Alarmed, the disciples ask, "Lord, is it I?" "It is one of you twelve. The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed. Good were it for him if he had not been born." John, sitting nearest, whispers, "Lord, who is it?" In an under tone he replies, "He it is to whom I give this sop." He gives it to Judas, and looking him straight in the eye, says, "What thou doest, do quickly."

Finding himself discovered, urged on by the devil, Judas arises and goes out.

It is now near midnight. See that traitor wind his solitary way through the empty streets to his allies with the information that at last their victim is in their power. An armed band, led by Judas, go to the upper room, but it is vacant now. They go out—pass over Kedron into Gethsemane, and suddenly the disciples there behold lights flashing athwart the darkness and hear the martial tread of soldiers. Nearer, nearer they come, and with dismay they see Judas leading them on—see him approaching Christ, exclaiming, "Hail,

Master," and kissing him. The damning deed is done. The traitor's contract is fulfilled. Two words tell the rest of the tragic tale—remorse and suicide. He hurls back the blood money to those who gave it, goes out and hangs himself, and falling headlong, he bursts asunder, and all his bowels gush out. His remains are buried in the field of blood, and the epitaph written over it is, "*He went to his own place.*"

Such is his biography. What kind of a man was he? Do any more of such men live now? Was he an isolated or a representative character? Let us see. I think it plain that he was a *shrewd, cunning, deceitful man, in whom one propensity, the love of money, preponderated*. In proof of the *first part of this affirmation*, I urge these facts. His shrewdness and cunning are seen in the fact that he never *committed those indiscretions* which the other disciples so often fell into. Nothing is more apparent than that in spite of all Christ's declarations to the contrary, his disciples persisted in believing that his kingdom was to be an earthly one. Hence you read of contentions among them, as to who should be greatest in it. We find even the just James, and the loving John striving to secure beforehand, chief places of administrative power. But while Judas doubtless felt more solicitude than any other man, you read of no indiscreet word falling from his lips. He does not trouble himself with these contentions, but keeps calm, cool, with an eye evermore to the windward, and even

when he rebuked Mary, he did it under the guise of care for the poor !

Take another fact. *He was so secretive that he completely deceived his eleven associates, who were his companions for at least two years and a half, as to his real character.*

When, on the lake shore, Christ said, "One of you is a devil," not one of them suspected the respected *treasurer*. And when, on that memorable Thursday night, at the table, Christ said, "*One of you shall betray me*"—bear in mind that Judas had made the betrayal contract days before—not even then one of them suspected him. No, they sooner suspected themselves, for each said, "Lord, is it I?"—and the doomed wretch also mumbled out, "Lord, is it I?" More than this. After Christ had said, "What thou doest do quickly," and Judas departed, still such was his reputation among them, that even then they did not think that he was referred to, for the record says, "That they thought Jesus had commanded Judas to buy something for the feast, or carry a donation to the poor."

And more still. Even when in the garden, in accordance with the preconcerted sign, he betrayed Christ with a kiss, the disciples do not seem to have comprehended it.

I tell you if they had, I believe Peter would have cut off the head of Judas instead of the ear of the servant !

In proof of the second branch of my affirmation as to his character, reflect upon one significant fact. I

refer to the *manner of the betrayal*. The sign agreed upon for identifying Jesus was—a *kiss*. Think of that! A kiss, the world over, is a symbol of peace—a pledge of friendship—a testimonial of affection—a seal of true love. Yet by it this deceitful wretch proposed to betray a professed friend, and at the same time conceal his connection with the accursed deed. Oh! had he lifted up his right hand and smitten with a blow that sacred cheek, it had been at least manlier, less villainous, but to betray Jesus with what was never regarded as an exponent of treachery, but a pledge of fidelity, was the very culmination of base deceit. Indeed its baseness seems to have amazed our Lord himself, for as soon as he felt the envenomed lips on his cheek, he started back, exclaiming “*Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*”

In proof of the last branch of my proposition, viz., *that in him one propensity, the love of money, predominated, I urge these proofs:*

Before his discipleship he may have been, doubtless was, a close, sharp man in money matters, and this trait may have led to his selection as treasurer. Had a phrenologist felt of his head, he would have pronounced *acquisitiveness large*. See this trait develop itself. He wants money. With the others, he anticipates that Christ is to establish a worldly kingdom, in which, of course, his first disciples will have prominent places. But while they dream of honor and fame, thrones and power, he seems to have cared nothing for them, contenting himself with the assurance that in the regular course of promo-

tion the humble steward of the present scanty fund for incidental expenses must become lord high treasurer of the new kingdom.

But he can not wait; he must secure some now. Hence he steals, little by little, from time to time—thief that he was.

And, it was the yielding of his nature to this bias which finally led him to commit the crime which has branded his name with deathless infamy. For just as soon as all of his fondly-cherished anticipations were blasted, in regard to a worldly kingdom—just as soon as he discovered that nothing more was to be made by fidelity to Jesus—he betrayed him for the wretched sum of thirty pieces of silver. See him, in the greed of his sordid soul, go out from the social circle at Bethany, in the dark night, while the blackness around him forebodes the shadow of his doom, and wending his guilty way to the priestly conclave, and there deliberately enter into the infernal compact! See the wild glare of his snaky eyes, the close knitting of his low brows, the pallor of his trembling lips, as he says, “What will ye give me, and I will betray him unto you?”

Poor, money-loving fool! clutching for this paltry gain, in his desperation to secure something from what seemed to him an universal and hopeless wreck!

Such, friends, is the Judas of the Scriptures. Such, without stopping to notice the speculations of German and other critics, I believe to be a true and faithful portraiture of this man.

Was he an isolated character, or may we regard him

as a representative man? Would to Heaven the former were true! But, alas! alas! the history of every succeeding age, of almost every great enterprise; the workings of every social, political, moral, and religious organization reveal the existence of similarly perfidious men, who, for supposed present selfish aggrandizement, have sacrificed every other temporal and eternal interest. Ah me! there have been, there are, cunning, shrewd, deceitful men, who have become traitors to friendship, traitors to the tenderest conjugal love, traitors to their own manhood, traitors to religion, traitors to liberty, traitors to country. Hence Addison exclaimed,

“Is there not some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the store of heaven,
Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man,
Who owes his greatness to his country's ruin?”

From all these successors in the line of Judas devoutly let us pray, “Good Lord deliver us.”

This biography and this character suggest important lessons.

Of these the first is this. It illustrates how truly “the love of money is the root of all evil.” This was the radical element in the character of Judas. Doubtless, small at first, it produced only keen frugality. Doubtless he was at first as respectable a man as any of the other disciples, and had a reputation for honesty and careful management of money. But this root grew downward and upward, gradually choking the growth and overshadowing better tendencies until, finally, it fruited

out into the most dismal of possible crimes. You behold him, for the miserable pittance of thirty pieces of silver—which was all he could get—betraying his Lord into the hands of those whom he knew were panting for his blood. And as developing the strength to which this money-loving propensity had grown, remember *that his crime was unprovoked*. Other great traitors have claimed, with some show of reason, that they had strong provocation. Arnold, the American traitor's naturally gallant and chivalrous spirit, *it is claimed*, was goaded to desperation by undeserved provocation and unrewarded merit. Georgy, the Hungarian traitor, has written a book in justification of his course. But look at the money-bought treachery of Judas! He had always been treated with kindness by his Master. He himself could not say one word, proffer one shadow of palliation or excuse for his conduct. He stands, therefore, on a height of bold iniquity which no other man ever reached; he towers in black turpitude high above all other traitors, a stern, enduring monument of what this single predominating propensity of money-worship can lead a man to do.

Moreover, impelled by this, he coolly *premeditated his treachery*. No human being suggested it to him, or solicited it from him. Nay, he alone thought it out. He sought the enemies of the Lord; they did not seek him. They offered him no tempting bribe; nay, he meanly asked, "What will ye give?" And so settled was he in this purpose that he could sit unagitated by the side of his Victim on the very night

when his crime was to be consummated, and heedless of the awful warning then given, which it would seem was sufficient to have staggered any ordinary criminal purpose, he looked, with the cool effrontery of a demon, in the face of Christ, and said, "Lord, is it I?" Inordinate love of money was the root of all this evil. The keenest analyst, who will keep close to the facts and not speculate, can detect the operation of no other element.

And will you tell me where are the limits of the workings of this passion when it once gets sway, which dims the perceptions, indurates the conscience, and shrinks up the heart in its cold, calculating, plotting selfishness? Think of the dismal brood of crimes it originates—the lies, the breaches of trust, the artful knaveries, the heartless perfidies, the wrecks of manhood, with which to-day it curses the world! The truth is, that let any man in the church or out of it arrive at a point where avarice predominates in his character, and he is prepared to commit, for its gratification, any crime which he imagines he can commit safely. The great question with him, then, with regard to any occupation, or specific act, is not, *Is it right?* but, *Will it pay?* In other words, it is the old Judas question, "What will ye give?" Thus, manhood, truth, honor, are put up to the highest bidder! Ah, me! this question rings even now through all the ramifications of society. In the slave market, where an auctioneer, whose heart has long since become petrified, pointing to a human being, cries, "What will ye give?" in the claims of a licentious and venal press; in legal

tribunals where bribes blind justice; in the pulpit of that most despicable of beings, a sycophantic preacher, who has stolen the livery of heaven to serve the devil in; in the busy marts of commerce, where all godliness is ignored for gain; in the halls of reckless legislation; alas! everywhere, to ears attuned aright, this old Judas question is heard!

Young man, you think that you can never become so lost to the right and the true. Alas! so once thought nine-tenths of the very men who now hold that a good bargain justifies any conduct. Remember, that avarice is a root full of life, and that it will grow unless eradicated at once. I beg you, therefore, to place a just estimate on money, and nothing more; and when the tempter shows you how it can be gotten by lying, cheating, or perfidy, look him steadily in the eye, and ask, *How much must I give for it?* How much of my manhood, my self-respect? How many scorpion stings must I arm my conscience with? How many thorns must I plant in my dying pillow? How many of the attributes of God must I array against myself? How much moral blindness must I bring upon myself?

For, not the least of the effects of avarice is the moral blindness it induces. Those thirty pieces of silver blinded Judas to the infamy of his purposed treachery, and thus he was led on to crime and doom.

2. *We are here taught what sometimes, even in this world, are the consequences of successful avarice.*

The bargain Judas himself proposed is consummated.

The stipulated price is paid. The coveted money is in his hard hand. He clutches it firmly, as all he could make, save, out of what he believes is a wrecked enterprise. He feels a momentary exultation at the thought that while the other disciples get nothing, he at least has secured something to add to his hoarded store, which has slowly but surely accumulated. His part of the contract is fulfilled, the damning deed is done. Christ is in the hands of those who have resolved on his death. The disciples, like shepherdless, frightened sheep, are scattered. Exulting fiends look on in triumph, and howl, "*Aha, so would we have it.*" The traitor has nothing to do now but to eat, drink, and be merry. The earth uttered no groans, the heavens muttered no thunder, when he said, in tones of friendship, "*Hail, Master, and kissed him.*" He thinks that he has been very shrewd. The faithful disciples are too weak to injure him, and he has made friends of their enemies. He believes that he has covered up his tracks; no one disturbs him; both himself and his money seem safe! But look at him now. There is trouble on his brow, in his eyes, in his heart. Somehow he does not feel as he thought he should. Somehow the money, the money has lost its anticipated value. It does not do for him what he expected it would. Like fabled Midas, his wish is granted, but it proves a torment. His silver, as if touched by some magician's wand, has become a curse. A new and strange feeling is working in his soul. He can not repress or shake it off. Ah! it is remorse!

It grows keener and keener. It begins to throw the

black shadow of his infamy over every object. It finally goads him to frenzied desperation; wildly he rushes to his coadjutors, dashes the blood money at their feet, and shrieks, "*I have betrayed innocent blood!*" And his own blood curdles in his heart as he hears their bitter response, "*What is that to us? See thou to it.*" Ah! that tears from his guilty soul the last remnant of hope; for feeling that

"The common damned shun his society,
And look upon themselves as fiends less foul,"

he rushes out into the gloom and hangs himself. Behold now the traitor swinging by a halter of his own making, in the silent night air. But see, the halter breaks, his horribly-convulsed body falls to the earth, his abdomen bursts, his bowels gush forth! O, disgusting and appalling sight! And the record adds, that with his thirty pieces of silver—as if even those who bought him with it dared not appropriate that polluted money to any other purpose—they bought with it a field in which his mutilated remains were buried, and it was called "*the field of blood.*"

Do you say, as many have done, *that Judas was disappointed at the result of his treachery; that he hoped thus to force Christ to assert his power and save himself and his cause?* I reply, that of that there is not a shred of proof. But, had it been so, it would not have diminished the traitor's guilt. Men are always disappointed in the results of successful crime. They are invariably thus deluded. Its conse-

quences are always more terrible and far-reaching than are foreseen. Especially is this true of crimes committed through inordinate love of money. It does n't do for them what they expected it would ; results follow they did not provide for, and sometimes direct judgments from heaven overtake them. Achan got the golden wedge he coveted, but was stoned to death. Gehazi obtained raiment and silver by deceit, but with them he got perpetual leprosy. Ananias and Sapphira gratified their avarice by lying, but were both stricken dead. And God hath said, "Go to now, ye rich men (*i. e.*, men who have gotten rich by unlawful means), weep and howl for the miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted ; your garments are moth-eaten ; your gold and silver are cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire."

No wonder that the poet exclaims,

"O cursed love of gold ! why, for thy sake,
The fool throws up his interest in both worlds ;
First starved in this, then damned in that which is to come."

3. *In this history is also illustrated the nature and operations of a false repentance.*

The record says that after his crime, "Judas repented himself." Mark the language ; he repented himself, not his sin ; he felt remorse, not contrition. His conscience writhed ; his heart did not break. He had no sorrow on account of the essential turpitude of his guilt. Its unlooked-for consequences horrified him,



drove him to frenzy, to suicide, not to a merciful God for pardon. He repented just as a murderer does when he comes in sight of the gallows he hoped to escape.

This was false, hollow repentance, the sorrow of the world which worketh death. How unlike that of Peter, who also sinned, but while "he went out and wept bitterly," Judas shed no tear; who ran eagerly to the vacant tomb on the resurrection morning, while Judas fled from him, even after he had betrayed the Lord. Peter's repentance, as does evermore that which is genuine and evangelical, led him to a sin-pardoning God by the way of the cross, while that of Judas led him to a suicide's awful death, by the way of a gallows of his own erection.

And, lastly, this history reveals to us the destiny of such men after death.

What became of his guilty spirit, think you, as it emerged from that mangled body? Whither winged its immortal flight? To a holy heaven? Nay, your own moral natures and the word of God both unite in responding, no. Whither, then? Ah! the record tells us, "He went to his own place," to that place in the spirit world which was "his own" by all the affinities of his settled character, as well as the decree of Heaven. That place the Bible calls hell, where the worm of remorse dieth not, and the fire of retribution is unquenchable, the elements of which are even now in every such depraved heart, and shall burn there during all the eternal years, unless quenched this side the grave by penitence and pardon through the blood of the Lamb.

For in that lone land of deep despair, no hope ever gleams athwart the Cimmerian gloom. Ah! it was in view of these terrible and eternal results that the loving Jesus uttered those fearfully true words, "It had been good for that man if he never had been born."

However we may get out of our appropriate places in this world, we shall not in the next. Each of us shall go to "his own place," that place for which we are prepared by the elements of our voluntarily-formed character, be it heaven, be it hell.

O God our Father, O God our Saviour, and God the Holy Spirit, so renew and aid us by thy grace, we devoutly beg, that we may be prepared for heaven, and thine shall be the glory, for ever and ever. Amen, and amen.

v.

The Beloved Man.

JOHN,
The Beloved Man.

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"We need not be afraid to avow, that we have our favorites among Scripture writers, and that a leading favorite is John. There was one 'disciple whom Jesus loved;' and we plead guilty to loving the writer supremely too."—GILFILLAN.

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It is rare that a man's reputation exactly corresponds with his character. As a general truth, it is either better or worse, greater or less, than he deserves. Hence, we have overrated and underrated men, perhaps more of the former than of the latter.

There are various causes productive of this effect. One is the false standards of popular judgment; another is the common practice of trying different men, how different soever their idiosyncracies may be, by the same standard; and another still, is the quite prevalent custom of constructing reputations on too narrow bases. Many a man is called a good man because he performs a good act, and another a bad one because he commits a bad deed, when, as Dr. Wayland finely observes, "a single action is rarely decisive of character, even in respect to that department to which it belongs. A single illiberal action does not prove a man to be covetous, any more than a single act of charity proves him to be

benevolent. How unjust, then, must it be to proclaim a man destitute of a whole class of virtues because of one failure in virtue! How much more unjust, on account of one fault, to deny him all claim to virtue whatsoever."

It is true that the reputations of the men of general history are more fairly dealt with. That of Washington, as a patriot, rests on no single magnanimous display of patriotism; that of Howard, as a philanthropist, on no one development of philanthropy; that of Shakespeare, as a poet, on no single comedy, or tragedy; that of Napoleon, as a warrior, on no single successful battle; or those of Chalmers and Edwards, as theologians, on no single sermon or book, but upon their entire history considered in respect to such particulars. Thus it ought to be. For, as a house is built not with one huge stone or massive piece of timber, but by the proper adjustment of many of each, so a desirable general reputation ought to be, and in fact is, based on and grows up out of various developments of praiseworthy character, and not any single act.

Is this true, however, of the men of the Scriptures? Each of these, at least the more prominent, has a reputation assigned him in the public estimation. But is that not very generally founded on a very narrow basis—on single facts in their history, rather than their lives viewed as a whole? Reflect a moment—on the mention of either of their distinguished names do you not immediately associate with them some single event or act which in your view gives coloring to their indi-

vidual reputations? I think that I shall be able to demonstrate in this lecture that it is emphatically true of the representative man, the facts of whose history and the true features of whose character I shall now attempt to unfold.

There is much to impress us at the outset with interest in the Apostle John. The fact, that of all the primal disciples he was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," awakens anxiety to know what kind of a man attracted the special affection of our Lord, and enjoyed this distinguished honor. So also the fact that he was the youngest of the twelve apostles—having been, as it is supposed, only about twenty-five years of age at the period of the crucifixion—throws additional interest about him.

He was the brother of James, who was put to death by Herod Agrippa, and whose memory is crowned with glory as the first apostle who suffered martyrdom. John was the younger son of Zebedee and Salome, who is believed to have been a near relative of the ever blessed Mary, the mother of our Lord. With his parents he resided near the sea of Galilee, and with his father pursued the humble occupation of fishing. There is evidence, I think, that his family were in better pecuniary circumstances than those of Peter and the other disciples. For the record says that when James and John were called, "they left their father in the boat with the servants," which implies that they carried on the business on a more extensive scale than others did, who are never represented as employing

servants at all. Connect with this the fact that his mother is mentioned as one of those "who followed Christ and ministered to him of her substance," and that as the intimate friend of the Marys she is spoken of as one of those women who came early to the sepulchre on the resurrection morning, bearing spices to embalm the body of their crucified Lord. Remember also that of all the apostles, John was the only one who owned a house, to which, after the crucifixion, he led the broken-hearted mother of Jesus from the cross where in speechless grief she had seen that sacred form, which had so often been pressed to her maternal bosom, writhe in unutterable agony, and expire in ignominy. That house must have been part of the patrimonial estate. Nicephorus, an ancient writer, says, on what authority I am not aware, that "John sold part of the property given him by his father to Annas the High Priest, and with the proceeds purchased a house in Jerusalem near Mount Zion." Connect with these still another fact. I refer to the terms of familiarity which existed between our representative man and the High Priest; and from all these circumstances the conclusion seems inevitable that his family, both in regard to possessions and position, were superior to his companions. Moreover, there is throughout his entire history a tone of cultured refinement, which indicates a higher grade of social and educational influence, than was enjoyed by any other of the Galilean disciples.

Reflect too upon his name. Unlike us, Jewish

parents gave a name to their child, not simply because it was convenient, or had been borne by a relative, but because of some special significancy. His name in its original Hebrew form means, "favored of God." Unlike us, too, Jewish parents held "that they who suffered a son to grow up without being educated to the extent of their ability, at least in the principles of religion, were to be ranked amongst the vilest of mankind." If, therefore, Zebedee and Salome had a son whom, because they deemed him "favored of God," they called "John;" and if they held such views in regard to the education of children, it is fair to presume that they took special pains and care with reference to the educational nurture of their favored one.

Look now at the naked facts of his external history, grouped closely together. The first we hear of him is as a disciple of John the Baptist, then as visiting the Saviour in company with Andrew, attending the wedding at Cana, where Christ wrought his first miracle, "where the conscious water saw its God and blushed;" and subsequently as having been called to the apostleship, and entering upon its duties. The first words recorded as having been spoken by him were uttered at Capernaum, where the Master was teaching his little band a lesson of humility, which they very much needed. He had called a little child to him, and taking it in his arms, said, "Whoso shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me; for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." The others

were silent, but "John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followed not with us." With unwonted severity, Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea." Soon after James and John were sent forward to secure lodgings for the company at a Samaritan village on their way to Jerusalem. The Samaritans refused to grant this privilege in their village, not because of any special opposition to Christ and his cause, but because they would not, in their exclusiveness, give "aid or comfort" to any person going to Jerusalem for religious purposes. John and his brother were terribly indignant at this conduct, and angrily asked, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven to consume them, as Elias did?" Again he was rebuked; for the Master said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." On the same journey another incident occurred. Peter gave expression to the feelings of all the disciples by asking this question: "Lord, we have left all and followed thee; what shall we have?" The reply was, that their reward should be great: that they should receive an hundred fold greater than their loss. And their imaginations were fired with the prospect that seemed held out before them; inasmuch as he assured them that when his work was completed, and he should sit down on his throne, they, too, should sit on thrones. The joy of all at this announcement was too great for words. But

John and his brother immediately set to work to secure *the most important positions*, the one on the right and the other on the left of the Messiah-king. Not daring to make this request themselves, they sought the intercession of their mother, who presented herself before the Master for that purpose. Think for a moment of that woman. Why is the title of "mother of Zebedee's children" given her? Why is she not called the "relative of the honored Mary?" or "Zebedee's wife?" or "Salome?" Was it not because *the highest honor her womanhood enjoyed was to be the mother of two such sons*? Doubtless she was a good woman, a good wife, a good neighbor; but her motherhood of such children was her chief honor. Ah! many a woman feels now that a similar fact in relation to herself is her chief glory! It is noticeable that nothing is said directly of Zebedee, their father. He seems to have been a quiet man, who left the main part of the family administration to his wife. Their children were called "sons of thunder;" and I very much suspect, that there was much more "thunder" in the composition of the mother, than of the father.

Sympathizing with the ambition of her sons, Salome besought Christ, saying, "Grant that these, my two sons, may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, when thou comest in thy glory." She presented the petition, they received the answer. Calmly Jesus replied, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They

said unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." After this, we have no mention of John, except that he was present with Peter and James at the Transfiguration, until, in making the arrangements for keeping the Passover for the last time, and instituting the Supper, he, with Peter, was sent to select the place and make the arrangements. They secured the memorable "upper room" for the occasion ; and at the table on that sad and solemn Thursday night before the crucifixion, John sat nearest the Lord, leaned affectionately on that sacred bosom which, on the morrow, was to be pierced by the cruel spear, and asked who it was that should betray him. He went with his Lord to Gethsemane, and when the other disciples fled, and even Peter followed afar off, he went with him into the hall of the High Priest ; and when his Lord was condemned, he followed him to Calvary, and was the only man in the little group that gathered around the cross. And when the final agony came on, and the dying sufferer cast the last glance of his glazing eyes upon the weepers beneath him, and feebly but tenderly said, "Woman, behold thy son," and "Behold thy mother," no gesture accompanied those farewell words. The nailed and mutilated hands could make none. But they were distinctly understood, for "from that hour that disciple took her to his own house." On the resurrection morn-

ing, he was the first man to visit the vacant sepulchre, for "he outran Peter." Only once more do we read of him before the ascension. With seven disciples the risen Lord was on the lake. He had prophesied concerning Peter's end, and then Peter asked concerning John, "Lord, what shall this man do?" The reply was, "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." The singularity of this remark caused the saying to go abroad that John was never to die, although Jesus meant far differently. After the ascension, John seems to have been more particularly the companion of Peter. He was with him in the temple when the lame man was healed. He was with him cast into prison by the Sanhedrim. He was deputed with him to visit the new church in Samaria. To these two Paul addressed himself, as to those "who seemed to be pillars, and gave him the right hand of fellowship." In the division of provinces made by the apostles, Asia fell to John. It is believed, however, that he remained at Jerusalem until the death of his honored charge, Mary, which occurred fifteen years after the ascension, and that then he entered on his great work. By his means churches were founded at Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. After many years, Domitian, the Roman emperor, ordered the proconsul of Asia to apprehend him, and send him bound to Rome, whence he was finally banished to Patmos, a desolate island in the Ægean sea. There those sublime revelations were made to him which are recorded in the last book of the Bible. Subsequently,

the edict of banishment was revoked, and he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his gospel and epistles, and in a good old age, reaching nearly to a century and a quarter, he went down to his grave like a shock of corn fully ripe unto the harvest, the only one of the original twelve who died a natural death, encircled by the glory which appertained to "*the last of the Apostles.*"

You have now in their connection the outward facts of his history. Let us seek to enter into his inner life, to discern *the type of manhood he embodied*, and of *Christian character he developed*.

After a somewhat careful examination of this history, I am free to confess that in my judgment the popular impressions concerning this apostle are erroneous, and that I have quite lost patience with the ordinary pictorial representations of him. Take for instance Leonardi de Vinci's "Last Supper," which is regarded as the best of these. You doubtless remember it, for it is found almost everywhere.

In that picture, you see John nearest the Lord. His face is that of a tender, loving woman. The eyes are downcast, with an expression of feminine timidity. His smooth chin has no beard, and looks as if it never would have. The hair of his head is parted in the middle, and falls down on either side in wavy ringlets, and the entire impression you receive of his character closely approximates effeminate sentimentalism, or at least that of amiability, so predominating as not only to quite overshadow other qualities, but to be inconsistent with

our ideas of a well-developed man. That picture, as well as the popular impression, gives him credit for *heart* at the expense of *intellect*. Now, *is this correct?* With the facts of his life before us, we must answer in the negative. The John of that celebrated picture is the ideal of the Papacy. That is a Roman Catholic picture, executed by a Romanist for the Roman church, and yet it truthfully embodies the general Protestant conception of him.

To my mind, immense injustice is thus done to the John of the Bible. It makes him to have been *merely* a mild, amiable, affectionate man, and when he is spoken of, it is merely as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." But this is only one fact of his history, and I see no reason for believing that any peculiar softness was essential to a character, which the Master could especially admire. The disciples he chose were decidedly strong men; strong in those elements of manly character which adapted them to the vast work of establishing Christianity amid the opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil. Where is the proof that in these general characteristics John was an exception? Let us, therefore, first review the more prominent points of his history with reference simply to discovering the traits of his natural manhood.

Whence came he? From Galilee. What was his original occupation? That of a fisherman. What were the general characteristics of Galilean fishermen? Josephus truly says, "that they were ardor, fierceness, and ambition." We shall see that John possessed all

of these. But just here, I beg you to remember the title which Jesus, who knew him thoroughly, gave this man. Surnames, you are aware, in the Scriptures, indicate the *leading feature* of the character of those to whom they are applied. Thus, James was surnamed Barnabas, which means "a son of consolation." Simon was called Peter, which means "a rock." What did the Master call John and his brother? "Boanerges." Does that mean sons of love, amiability? Nay, it means "*sons of thunder*." A very different element, therefore, must have been the predominating one in the natural character of our representative man, from that which is generally assigned to him, to have justified the title.

Behold its developments as we review the leading incidents of his history. When the divine Lord taught that beautifully illustrated lesson of humility, John showed less appreciation than any other disciple, and manifested a spirit far from being amiable and lovely, both in the tone and language he used. Verily, in that authoritative forbidding of those who, although doing good, did not follow with him, I hear the "thunder" on account of which that surname was given him. You have not forgotten the keen rebuke he received.

And when the Samaritans refused to accommodate the company, it certainly was neither polite nor generous in them, but after all it was no very important matter. But how angry John became. How his eyes must have flashed, and his cheeks burned, when he demanded leave "to call down fire from heaven and con-

sume them!" Do you not hear the mutterings of thunder in these words, which indicate the presence of a spirit which would have hurled the consuming flames upon the objects of its wrath, if it could? That certainly was neither amiable nor lovely.

Then see the same energetic power develop itself in the *form of ambition*. He, with his brother, not contented with the prospect of occupying a throne in the new kingdom, sought to secure beforehand the chief thrones for themselves. The ambition thus exhibited not only was severely rebuked by Jesus, but "the ten disciples were moved with indignation" against them. John, therefore, was not constitutionally the mild, effeminate man which pictorial and popular conceptions make him; but he possessed the ordinary Galilean traits of character, ardor, fierceness, and ambition, and developed *them more strongly than the most of his brethren*.

But I have said that the current view of this disciple gives him credit for heart at the expense of intellect. Is this not so? Do you associate any special mental power with his name? Is he not regarded in fact as being as much inferior to others in point of real intellectual energy as he was superior to them in affectionateness? Is this just? Doubtless he had a great heart, great in the wealth, great in the tenacity of its affections. But had he not an equally great mind? In order to answer this question intelligently, we must consider his writings, his mental productions. A distinguished author has truly said, "St. John's was by

eminence, as developed in his writings, an intuitive mind, seeing into things themselves, rather than receiving conclusions from elaborate reasonings. He was as marked by this, as Paul was by logical tendency, or Peter by executive power. His imagination was also as intuitive as his reason. The Apocalypse may consistently be regarded as the work of his intuitive imagination; his gospel, as the work of his intuitive intellect; and the graphic imagery of the one, and the clear, lucid statement of the other, indicate the various action of the same master-mind upon divine truths."

Consider the difference between his gospel and that of either of the other evangelists. While that of Matthew was addressed more directly to the Jews, that of Mark to the Romans, and that of Luke to the Greeks, John's gospel is *to the world* of all time, presenting the work of Christ in its grandest view. They begin by recounting Christ's earthly ancestry and the particulars of his birth. In his gospel John spreads at once a mighty pinion and takes a loftier flight. "He at once," as Jerome says, "eagle-like, pierces the empyrean, ascends to the throne of God, and stands self-poised amid its ineffable glories, and beside its awful gulfs." Hear his first utterance, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." What writer in the Bible so fully equals Moses in sententious grandeur! Behold here the Christian Plato presenting to us by one grand expression the eternal dignity of his Lord; at a blow demolishing the foundations of prevalent Gnostic philosophy. His rec-

ord is the fullest as well as the most beautifully-written of any. It is a unity. The first part, reaching through the twelfth chapter, describes those facts of Christ's life which are necessary to illustrate fundamental doctrines. The second part presents Christ's glorification, in the victory of his faith and love over trial, and his exaltation through death and the resurrection. Commentators have called this book "the heart of Christ," "the permanent gospel, written as by an angel's pen." Thus Matthias Claudius writes concerning it: "Most dearly of all do I love to read in St. John. In him there is something so entirely fascinating; twilight and night, and through them the lambent, flashing lightnings. A soft evening cloud, and behind the cloud the great full moon itself! Something so pensive and exalted and full of yearning, that one can not tire of it. In reading John, it is always as if I saw him before me, leaning on his Master's bosom, at the last Supper; as if his good angel stood by me, and in certain passages would fall upon my neck and speak in my ear. I do not understand all that I read, but often it is as if his meaning floated in the distance before me, and even when I look into some dark place, I still have a presentiment of a great majestic meaning which I shall one day understand."

In his epistles you do indeed see wondrous, all-permeating love, but do you not also mark the operations of a finely-cultured and powerful intellect? Picture

him to your imagination on the sea-girt Patmos a banished man,

“Placed far amid the solitary main.”

He has survived early friends and relatives. His brother disciples have all long since suffered martyrdom. Ninety years in their flight have passed over him and dropped their snows on his head. He is alone in his old age, and left to die on a wild shore, against which the merciless billows dash evermore. But see the strength of his manhood remaining yet, insomuch that he calmly writes down those awful visions, the record of which “has made popes tremble and toss upon their midnight beds; conquerors turn pale as they saw or thought they saw their own achievements traced along its mysterious page, and their own bloody deeds anticipated; which has fired the muse of the proudest poets, and the pencil of the most gifted artists, and drawn as students and admirers around its cloudy center the doctors, theologians and philosophers of half the world.”

Again, I ask, while admitting that John has not the executive will of Peter, or the controversial skill of Paul, or the presiding ability of James, was he not as great in his intellectuality, as he was in his warm and large-heartedness? And were not both of a high order? God bless the artist, then, who shall depict correctly to us the John of the New Testament, as a noble, finely-balanced man, and not a loving woman. For Jesus did not, and we can not intelligently admire a womanly man, or a manly woman. Both manhood and

womanhood have their own peculiar types of excellency. And in our representative man I claim that we have a truly manly character, with manly intellectual developments, manly grasp of thought, manly aspirations, together with manly affections, so warm in their high pulsations as to throw the ruddiness of their glow over his entire character. Grand indeed is this type of manhood. Too often we see in conjunction great minds and small hearts, or great hearts and weak minds, but here we have heart and mind combined in equal and finely-balanced harmony.

The following are some of the suggestions which the foregoing facts and analysis readily make to thoughtful attention.

1. *The Master displayed great wisdom in the choice of his disciples.* Look at them in a single group. There is Peter, with his strong impulses; Andrew, with his simple faith; James, with his solid martyr-devotion; Philip, with his willing obedience; James the Just, with his unbending integrity; Simon, with his sleepless zeal; Nathanael, with his guileless simplicity; Thomas, with his slow, doubting, but true friendship; Jude, with his warning eloquence; Judas, with his sordid avarice; and John, with his finely-balanced head and heart. His reason for choosing Judas we have considered. But look at them all; they differed each from the other, and yet each was a man of mark; and all retained their individual peculiarities, while they drank in his spirit, and worked together in their sublime mission. Moreover, it is truly affecting

to witness how Jesus strengthened their personal weakness, and called out their strong points of character, and made each in his sphere eminently useful. So he does now. He calls by his grace persons of no one class of character. He magnifies that grace in making men, differently constituted, its trophies, and placing them in positions for which their peculiarities best adapt them, and in which they can be most useful.

Let us learn from him, not to expect from our fellow-disciples the same developments of the same traits of character, but to bear with each other's constitutional peculiarities, for there is now in the church as great a diversity as there was in those early times. There are Peters and Johns and Thomases, and representatives of the other types, now as then. But Peter can not be John, John can not be Peter; neither of them will be Thomas. Each, however, *can be himself*, true to Christ and his cause; each can occupy his own place; each can be useful. While this fact teaches charity, it also inspires courage and fidelity. Our Master only requires what we can perform. Glory to his name, as he did not require of John to do Peter's work, but his own, so he only asks us to perform our own duty; and each of us may sing,

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
Who died my ruined soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

2. The lesson taught us by that incident in John's

history when we first heard him speak, is worthy of more attention than we have given it. The language he then employed, so inappropriately, was, "Lord, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, who followed not with us, and we *forbade him, because he followed not with us.*" The person whom he referred to was doubtless one of the disciples of John the Baptist, or one of the seventy whom Christ had commissioned. In either case, by John's own statement, we know that he was doing good in Jesus' name. Now, doubtless, this son of thunder was honest in forbidding this man to do good simply because he did not labor in company with himself. But at that time, although a converted man, he was a narrow-minded sectarian, who really thought that no good either could or ought to be done unless accomplished in connection with himself, and his brethren. Our representative man here developed a spirit which is identical with that sectarianism of this day, which compasses sea and land to make a proselyte to itself, but looks with suspicion upon all efforts to bring men to Christ with which it is not identified; which, in its wretched exclusiveness, endeavors to monopolize Christianity, and will not look with approbation on any man or body of men, however pious and zealous, who will not follow with it; that proud, haughty sectarianism which, so far as it dare, does just what John did, authoritatively forbids others to labor for Christianity, because they will not follow its lead, come under its control, and bear its name.

This is not the spirit of Christ. It is the spirit of pride and arrogance, bearing the name of religion. It is that unchristian spirit which makes us think more of Baptistism, or Presbyterianism, or Methodism, or Episcopalianism, than of Christianity. As I have said, John was a disciple when he possessed it, but he was an undeveloped Christian. He had not yet comprehended the world-embracing genius of the gospel. So we may be Christians and be sectarians now; but if we are, we may be assured that we are poor Christians, and have yet to be admitted into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. When we have reached that point of development, we shall rejoice in the spread of Messiah's kingdom by whomsoever advanced. Then shall we give the hand of Christian fellowship and the word of cheer to all who try to do good "*in Jesus' name.*" Then shall we sympathize with Paul when he says, "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, I do therein rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

3. *The peculiar type of John's piety is worthy of special study.* The developments of piety are always modified and directed, in a great degree, by the natural characters of its subjects. So true is this, that certain religious developments may be relied on as the sure exponents of the existence of certain predominating natural tendencies. Now, it is an interesting fact, that John's piety assumed the form of *special personal attachment to his Lord.* This distinguishes him from his brethren, and has been so much noticed as to lead men to over-

look other facts in regard to him. Because of this, you see him ever clinging closely to his Master. At the Supper, he was *not invited* to sit nearest Jesus, or lean on his bosom; nay, he did both of these things of his own accord. Any other disciple, for aught we know, might have done the same. His strong love drew him there. When the others all fled, he went with the sacred prisoner into the judgment hall, and was the only one of them who followed him to Calvary, unawed by the fierce Roman soldiery or the fiercer Jewish crowd. Fearlessly he stood at the foot of the cross, the strong tendrils of his mighty heart clinging with unyielding tenderness, amid all that ignominy, to the person of his beloved Saviour, on whose bosom he could no longer lean, for it was heaving, panting in the unutterable death agony. He was first at the opened sepulchre, and until the ascension was continually by the side of the risen Jesus. Hence it is that in his writings, we find so much more of the sayings and minor incidents of the life of our Redeemer recorded, than elsewhere. He introduces us to a nearer intimacy with the private life of the Master, than any of the other evangelists. He told us "Jesus wept." He drew for us those sweet home-pictures, those quiet, lovely, wayside scenes which hang up in the New Testament gallery. He wrote that sentence of sentences, "God is love." His epistles abound with the overflowings of a loving heart. Indeed the very words seem dewy with tears of joy, as he speaks of seeing Jesus, and being like him. Where can pathos more touching be found than

in the picture of this last of the apostles, ripe for heaven, trembling beneath the weight of more than an hundred years, standing amidst the followers of Christ, and as the first Christian patriarch, extending his withered hands, and in tones heavy with tenderness, saying, "Little children, love one another?" Think now of him as he was naturally—an ambitious, fierce son of thunder. Did his piety annihilate his natural forces? Did the peculiar type it assumed, of personal love to Christ, weaken his *natural* character? Nay, it only controlled, balanced, and properly directed those powers. Just as that after which he was named; when the storm is over and the thunder ceases, no power is destroyed. The elements that made the storm are only balanced, for the roar you heard, and the lightning you saw, were but the irregular actions of a force everywhere existent and essential to life. So true piety, instead of destroying the most energetic elements of manhood, controls and directs them in channels of highest usefulness.

Beautiful is the story told of this apostle in his old age. It is said that he was seized by a band of robbers, whose chief was a fearful man of blood, but who, in his early days, had been accustomed to hear him preach. The aged captive asked to be led to their captain, but the robber chief, recognizing him at once, turned to flee. "Stop," cried the dear old man. "Why flee from me, my son? Fear not; there is hope, for I will be surety to Christ for thee." At these kind words, uttered in tender, fatherly tones, the fierce man's heart

broke ; he wept like a child, and was led back a penitent into the Christian church.

Earnestly do I commend to you this form of experimental Christianity. Oh, it is a good thing to be a Christian at all ; but if you would attain the most beautiful, most useful, most happifying type of piety, imitate the example here placed before you. Cultivate an intimate personal acquaintance with Jesus. Cultivate ardent love to him as your brother, friend, Saviour. You, too, by faith, may sit at his side, and lean on his bosom ; you, too, may breathe in his sweet, loving, long-suffering, gentle spirit ; you, too, may become "a beloved disciple." Alas ! is it not true that but few of us attain to this ? We complain that we are not loved, when, in fact, we are not lovely. John was "beloved" because he "loved much." The affections of his nature clung and clustered around his beloved Lord, and thus grew strong and gloriously fruitful. Is it not true that to most of us Jesus is a remote acquaintance, in whom, to be sure, we trust for salvation, but who is not to us an ever-present, sympathizing, loving friend, to whom we give all the wealth of our hearts ? Ah, brethren ! dear brethren ! Jesus is willing to be to us all that he was to John. Are we willing to be to him what John was ? His great heart—yea, that heart which poured itself forth on the cross of redemption for us—yearns toward us in all its infinitude of wealth. He invites us to bring our poor hearts and place them against his, to be warmed by its beat, thrilled by its divine throbs. If

this were so, how much Christians would love one another! What heavens below our churches would be! Then "Ephraim would no longer vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim." Then how slight would denominational names and differences become! How mighty would be the consolidated influence of the collective church! Then infidelity would stand aghast, and hell tremble, angels rejoice, and the world soon be bathed in the full-orbed glories of the millennial day. Hasten that period, oh ascended Jesus! So thy faithful people, weary of strife and contentions, cry. So the bleeding interests of thy wounded, suffering cause cry. So the wants of a dying race cry.

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VI.

The Doubter.



THOMAS,
The Doubter.

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" 'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought;  
Do I love the Lord, or no?  
Am I his, or am I not?"  
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SYMPATHY is one of the finest developments of human character. Who has not known and felt its sweet influence? In dark hours of grief, when the poor heart bleeds—and whose has not at some time?—how tenderly soothing are the kind tones or tears or acts which indicate sympathy with our sorrow! Human nature rarely approximates so nearly the divine, as when it thus gives proof that the tide of others' woes reaches and moves it.

There is also mental as well as heart sympathy. This arises out of similarity of organization, taste and education. You are conscious, when your mind comes in contact with minds constituted like your own, developing tastes identical with yours, engaged in objects in which you are interested, of an intuitive fellowship with them; a drawing toward them; a specialty of interest in them. You understand, comprehend such better than any other differently related.

Moreover, there is, in addition to these, moral sym-

pathy existing between men differently constituted intellectually, arising out of similarity of moral condition and circumstances. As an illustration of this, review for a moment the representative characters we have already considered. In the wide world there are hosts of men, whose sensual natures lead them to sympathize with Herod, and who feel that, placed in similar circumstances, they would most likely have done as he did. There are others who are in keen sympathy with the stern reformer, John the Baptist, and others with the impulsive, fiery Peter. And is it not a mournful fact, that throughout society there are men who sympathize with Judas in his greed for money; and who, if they do not, like him, betray Christ for silver, it is only because they have not the opportunity; who hesitate at nothing, even to the periling of their immortality, in order to gratify their avarice? There are others who sympathize chiefly with the powerful, and finely-balanced head and heart of John. I may be mistaken in my present anticipation—men often are in their public efforts—still, with the full consciousness of this, I make the frank acknowledgment, that I expect in this lecture to present a character with whose leading feature, a larger number of persons will sympathize than with any previous one. That character is found in this representative man—THOMAS, *The Doubter*.

The merely historical facts in relation to him are few. We shall therefore have the more time, for discussing topics which they suggest. Of the complete college of apostles there were two classes. The orig-

inal twelve were all Galileans, chosen from one of the most despised sections of Palestine. The remaining two, Paul and Barnabas, were Hellenistic apostles—that is, Jews who were born and educated in parts where Grecian refinement abounded. Paul was born in Tarsus, a Roman province in Asia Minor; Barnabas, in the island of Cyprus. With these two may also be numbered their companions, the Evangelists Mark and Luke. All the former, *i. e.*, the Galilean apostles, were appointed directly by Christ himself. Matthias was chosen, by the one hundred and twenty disciples to fill the traitor's place. Thomas was one of the original twelve Galileans. He is called Thomas Didymus. This latter name is only a Greek translation of the Hebrew name "Thomas," and means "a twin brother." We know nothing of this man previous to his discipleship: and the record is very brief of him during the three years preceding the crucifixion. It is a somewhat singular fact, that the incidents with which he is connected are recorded only by John. The same thing, however, is true of several of the disciples. It is also observable that his name is frequently connected with that of Matthew. It has been inferred from this, that there must have been some close connection between them—that perhaps he was the twin brother, or engaged in the same occupation when called to the discipleship. It would seem, indeed, that there must have been some social or general sympathetic tie between these two disciples, thus intimately connected in the sacred history.

The *first incident* with which Thomas is associated occurred in connection with the raising of Lazarus from the dead, under the following circumstances. The hostility of his opponents in Jerusalem had become excited to such a pitch, that they sought to put Jesus to death ; but he escaped out of their toils, and with his little band retired beyond the Jordan, where John first baptized. There a messenger reached him from Mary and Martha, who said to him, " Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." Strange to say, after Jesus had received this intelligence, he remained where he was two days, during which time Lazarus died. Then he said, " Let us go into Judea." The disciples—surprised that he should thus rush into mortal danger—endeavored to dissuade him. But firmly Jesus responded, " Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, and I go that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples doubtfully shook their heads, and said, " If he sleep, he shall do well." " Then Christ said plainly, ' Lazarus is dead : and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe. ' " At this point we hear Thomas speak for the first time. He says to his brethren, " Let us go that we may die with him." The Master made no reply.

The *second incident* occurred on the night previous to the crucifixion, while at the Lord's table. With superhuman tenderness, Jesus said, " Let not your hearts be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so I would have told you : I go to prepare a

place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Again we hear Thomas speak and say, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" This, you perceive, was in direct opposition to what Christ had said; and I imagine his tenderness giving place to surprised dignity as, looking at Thomas, he replied, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The *third incident* was on this wise: the apprehension, trial and crucifixion of the blessed Saviour had transpired. That terrible Friday and Saturday were passed, and the first day appeared whose early dawn saw the scene we thus celebrate in holy song:

"Angels, roll the rock away;
Death yields up its mighty prey:
See! he rises from the tomb,
Rises with immortal bloom.
Christ the Lord is risen to-day,
Sons of men and angels say.
Raise your songs in triumph high,
Sing, ye heavens; ye earth reply;
Sin's redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won;
Lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er,
Lo, he sets in blood no more.
Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Christ hath burst the gates of death;
Lives again our glorious King;
Where, O Death, is now thy sting?
Once he died, our souls to save.
Where's thy victory, boasting grave?"

With lightning rapidity the news flew from lip to lip—"The Lord is risen, the Lord is risen." At length the resurrection day closes. Amid the gathering gloom, from different points, trembling with fear, the disciples meet at the memorable upper room. The doors are closed. Wonderingly they gaze upon each other, as they remember the fearful scenes, which have transpired since last they were assembled there. All their long-cherished hopes had expired. They had never again expected thus to meet, and now, in solemn silence, they wait for the fulfillment of their Lord's promise. They wait, however, but a few moments, for suddenly the risen Jesus appears among them, and with superhuman beauty and unutterable tenderness beaming from his face, where so lately triumphant death had placed his awful signet, lovingly he said, in joyful tones, "Peace be with you." Then, to confirm their faith, he showed them his hands where the nail scars of the cross were visible, and his side where the soldier's spear had pierced it. Overwhelmed by the mighty revulsion of their feelings, from despair to hope, from misery to bliss, all doubt and fear gone, the disciples felt within them the energy of a strange and new power, as the Lord breathed upon them, and for the first time said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Now look over that radiant band. There is Peter, John, Philip, Andrew, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, Zelotes, Jude, and James the son of Alphaeus. But these make only ten. Where are the other two? Judas is dead. Only one then of the living disciples is absent. Who is that one? Ah! it is Thomas. He is not present at this sublimely interesting meeting.



During the ensuing week his brethren meet and with inexpressible gladness tell him, "We have seen the risen Lord." But look at him. No joy beams from his face. The cloud is not lifted from his brow; nay, with sturdy vehemence he exclaims, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." We hear no more of him during that week. But on the evening of the first day of the second week, the disciples are again assembled in the upper room, and now Thomas is with them, and lo! Jesus again stands in their midst. All are silent. The Saviour's eye seeks and finds the disciple, who was absent at the previous meeting. No one has told him what the doubting Thomas had said. But hear him, as he speaks to the doubter. There is no anger on his brow, nor in his voice, but there is a mournful sadness in his words as he says, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side." With abashed reluctance he obeys. His finger is in the place where the cruel nail has been. His hand is in the healed wound left by the spear. His frame quivers with emotion. His vision is dimmed by tears. His doubts—O, how ashamed he is of them now—all disappear, and he cries, "My Lord and my God." Calmly Jesus replies, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed; be not faithless, but believing." The only record we have of this man in the Scriptures subsequently, is the state-

ment that he was one of those who were with Peter on the sea of Tiberias, when Christ appeared to them the third time.

We have now collated all that the New Testament says of Thomas. From other sources, such as Origen, Jerome and others, we learn that he preached the gospel in Parthia, Media, Persia, Ethiopia and in India. Indeed, it is claimed that he introduced the gospel into India, and it is affirmed that, from the earliest times until the present, there has existed in that country a large body of religious people who style themselves "St. Thomas Christians." They tell travelers many traditions respecting him, and even point out a place where they say he was martyred by the Brahmins and buried. I submit to you,

1. *That in this man's character a peculiar type is developed, which we have not before considered.*

Bear in mind, that he was not only a disciple, but elevated to the dignity of apostleship among the original twelve. Such was his positional eminence. But in him you see the development of a mind characterized by slowness to perceive spiritual truths, and to believe them, a mind in striking contrast with the confiding spirit of John, and the headlong zeal of Peter. Thomas doubtless possessed courage and rectitude. He seems to have desired to do right, and to have experienced an ordinary degree of love to Christ; but you never see him boldly committing himself to the guidance of high spiritualities, or maintaining a calm equipoise of steadfast faith. Incredulity was perhaps with him a consti-

tutional tendency; at any rate so marked is its development in his history, that by the universal Christian world he is called "doubting Thomas." And do not the facts of his history justify this title? Let us see. Reflect upon that circumstance in connection with which we first heard him speak, when the Saviour, having been informed of the sickness of Lazarus, after two days proposed to return to Judea, which in the disciples' view was to rush upon certain death. When Jesus would not be dissuaded from his purpose, Thomas said, "Let us go also, that we may die with him!" Some suppose that the pronoun "him" refers to Lazarus, and the meaning to be "We will go and meet the same fate which Lazarus has, for we shall certainly be put to death!" But it appears to me plain that the reference is to Christ, and that Thomas intended to say, "The Master will go, and if he does he will certainly be put to death; let us go and die with him!" Now, assuredly there is devotion to the person of Christ here manifested; but the courage exhibited seems more like desperation than any thing else. Whether, therefore, the reference was to Lazarus or to Christ, the same lack of faith, the same positive doubt is developed in regard to the Saviour's ability to do what he had promised, for he had distinctly told them that the issue of the journey should glorify him and confirm their faith, because not only would they be safe, but he would awake even Lazarus out of his death-sleep. Is it not clear that Thomas at least doubted, if he did not disbelieve these declarations?

Reflect upon the second incident which transpired on the night before the crucifixion, when the Saviour had plainly and beautifully spoken of heaven as of his Father's house, about his going thither and returning, and concluded by saying, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." No other disciple said a word. They seemed to comprehend him. But Thomas, looking up into his Lord's face, bluntly affirmed, "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" See you not the workings of a mind slow to perceive, and of a heart still slower to believe? The same trait is developed still more strongly in the last incident. He not only had failed, as did the others, to believe Christ when he distinctly told them that he should rise again on the third day, but Thomas would not believe the testimony of his ten brethren, who told him that they had actually seen the risen Lord, heard him speak and received his blessing. Nay, he says, "I will not believe except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand in'o his side." See you not now how well he deserves the title of "doubting Thomas," and how conspicuously this development of character stands out in his history?

Need I say that he is a representative man? that the world is full of doubters, and that multitudes develop the same peculiarity, although chiefly directed toward different points? Let us classify and consider some of these.

There are a small number of *philosophical doubters*.

These are men, who, on what they call philosophical principles, doubt almost every thing. They profess to be very keen logicians, and delight to dwell upon the sophisms, defective logic, and changing views of other men. They enjoy putting up one system against another, and then showing how each destroys the other. At one time, they side with the idealist, who denies, or at least doubts the existence of matter; at another, with the sensationalist, who denies or doubts the existence of mind, and accepting, though at different times, both of these, they have really no reality left, neither matter nor mind. Because men do not entirely agree, they argue that there is no standard of agreement, overlooking the fact that there are more points upon which men have positive agreement, than there are upon which they have positive differences. These doubters perpetually point us to the dark segments of the sphere of knowledge, and declare that we know nothing with certainty. While they practically ignore the fact, that there is clear light upon the most important segments, and in reference to the others overlook the important distinction between incompleteness of knowledge and total ignorance. Their motto, "we can not believe or disbelieve," is as unphilosophical as it is false. Essential truths are within the grasp of the universal human mind.

There is another class who are in reality *mere cavilers*. These are persons who seem to enjoy the reputation of being skeptical, of seriously doubting what those around them believe. They delight in proposing strange questions, and starting sharp dilemmas. They

prefer to be antagonists. They thus attract special attention. They quibble far more than they argue. To search out and dwell upon what seem to be contradictions in the Bible, affords them vast pleasure. A notable instance of this is found in Voltaire's writings, where he seriously charges Luke with contradicting himself, because in his gospel he says Christ ascended from Bethany, and in the Acts, from Olivet. Poor man, he did not know that Bethany was located on the Mount of Olives !

There is, however, a large class of *honest* doubters. This is made up of men who are constituted as Thomas was, and seem naturally prone to incredulity, whose perceptions are their weakest mental points, who are slow to believe on any subject, and whose emotional nature has too great control over their intellectual. Such are more or less timid in regard to every thing they undertake, and disposed to look on the dark side of all matters. This extends to their business affairs. If they are really doing well, they often fear that they shall become bankrupt. Although they possess a competency, they are often distressed lest they shall die in a poor-house. If it is clear weather, they apprehend a storm soon. If they have no trouble of their own, they will assuredly borrow some. Their faces even seem to have a natural tendency to elongation, and their voices to groans. They never grasp strongly and rest securely upon the great laws of Providence. When converted, their religious characters are affected by this constitutional bias. They doubt, fear, and hope ;

hope, doubt, and fear; and often go, even after years of experience of the grace of God, when they ought to be "steadfast and unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord," dolefully singing,

" 'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I his, or am I not?"

2. Let us consider some of *the causes* of doubting, in reference to religion.

These are various. We can notice, however only those which have a direct bearing on our discussion. With some the peculiarity of temperament to which I referred is the cause; with others downright ignorance is a cause, and with others a wrong educational bias has a potent influence in this direction. Multitudes of others still are influenced by a *preference not to believe*—a conscious dislike to religion. They prefer to secure arguments against it, rather than in its favor. They secretly enjoy far more what will confirm a doubt than what will remove it. They do not desire to become Christians. They do desire to strengthen themselves in their present position.

But with honest, sincere doubters there are two influential causes in operation, both of which we find illustrated in the life of Thomas.

Of these, one was *his failure to give due weight to competent testimony*.

Bear in mind that such testimony is a divinely-

established source of knowledge; and that the most of all we know is actually thus derived. All you know of past history or of events which have transpired since you were born, except the few of which you have been personally cognizant, is thus derived. All you know of the places, cities, countries of the world, except the few you may have visited, is thus derived. All the legal business of all lands, as well as most of the other kinds of business which men prosecute, is based on this. Can you conceive of a more ridiculous position any man could assume than his who says, "I will not believe any thing except what I have myself seen, been personally cognizant of, or experienced?" Let all take this position, and confidence will be broken up between man and man, society be disrupted, and the race settle back into barbarism. Friend, the human mind is so constituted that all it intelligently can ask, in order to believe, is *competent, adequate testimony*.

Had Thomas this proffered to him? Let us see. He had the prophetic promise of the resurrection of the Messiah given in the Scriptures. He had the explicit declaration of Christ, repeated again and again, that he would arise from the dead. He had the testimony, first, of Mary, who had seen the risen Lord in the garden, and spoken to him; second, that of Peter, to whom Christ had shown himself; third, that of the two disciples, who, upon the road to Emmaus, had walked and freely conversed with him; and, fourth, he had the united testimony of ten men of tried character, and unsullied reputations, who had personal knowledge of the

fact that the Lord Jesus, according to promise, had met them on the evening of the first day; that they had seen his risen body, heard his voice, and received his blessing. Was not this competent, adequate testimony? Was it not sufficient to establish any fact in a court of judicature? And yet, with all this before him, Thomas sturdily said, "Except *I* shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put *my* finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, *I will not believe.*" Do you not feel that he greatly erred in not giving due weight to such conclusive proof? Why should he not believe his brethren? What motive could they have for falsehood and deception? Many of them were better men, all of them as good, as himself.

Friends, the same cause operates still. Thousands on thousands have similar doubts, which have a similar origin—they do not, they will not give due credit to proper testimony.

It is sad, but true, that large numbers of persons are ignorant of the evidences of Christianity. They do not, they will not take the trouble to acquaint themselves with them, and therefore they easily fall a prey to infidelity, especially when it comes to them under the guise of some popular "ism." Others are to a degree acquainted with these, and yet doubt, simply because they do not give the same weight to this testimony which they do unhesitatingly give to evidence weaker and less reliable, touching other matters. Of course this is not the place to present the grand and

irresistible array of external and internal proof of the divinity of Christianity. And yet, I may refer to one branch in this connection. I refer to the testimony of those in whom you have the most implicit confidence, in relation to their personal experience of the divine truthfulness of the Bible, its doctrines and consolations. Such testimony, your father, your mother, your brother, your sister, the wife of your bosom and the friend of your heart, have given you. They have affirmed it amid the varied circumstances of life. They have affirmed it in the honest, solemn, awful hour of death. With their expiring breath they have witnessed for Jesus. And yet you doubt! You would believe them most implicitly in regard to any thing else—you would blush with very shame to suspect, even, their intelligence or honesty in relation to any other subject concerning which they should speak with such certainty and interest. But in spite of their evidence, still you doubt the reality of experimental Christianity!

Many, who are Christians, doubt, for the same essential cause. They fail to give full credit to the promises of God. Sometimes they put less faith in his than they do in men's promises, or than they demand that others should place in their own. They do not grasp the plenitude and eternal verity of all the words of Jehovah in covenant. Instead of looking at him as their God, they look at themselves. Instead of fixing their attention upon the infinitude of grace, they see only their own unworthiness, which they fear is more than a match for omnipotent love. They are

guilty of unbelief which refuses to heartily receive divine assurances. They overlook the fact, that it is just as easy for the ocean to bear on its vast billows the hugest ship that ever sailed, as to float the torn sea-weed; as easy for the sun to bathe in its world-embracing beams a mountain as a molehill; as easy for the wheeling globe to bear around the continents as a grain of sand; even so, Jehovah Jesus can bear with great unworthiness as easily as with little, pardon many sins as easily as a few, "save unto the uttermost all who come to God by him." They fail to believe that salvation is all of grace, rich, sovereign, almighty grace; that we "are accepted in the Beloved;" that "he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" that "we are complete in him." So, also, there are those who fail to give due credit to the testimony of their own experience in relation to the fact of their conversion. Such an one says, "I have no doubt in regard to the Bible, I know it is true. I do not doubt the promises, I know they are ample. But ah, me! I do doubt as to whether I have ever known the grace of God, whether I have ever been regenerated, whether I am a true Christian. This is my trouble." Do not such reject testimony? Do they not know that hypocrites are never thus troubled, that such were never the anxieties of an unregenerate soul? Friend, are you thus doubting? Tell me, do you not know that you are not what you once were, that you are conscious of exercises of heart and mind toward sin, the blessed Saviour, the Bible,

your heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, the people of God and his service, to which you were once an entire stranger? Do you not know that whereas you were once blind, now you see? Have there not been hours when your evidence of acceptance was clear and decisive—when the Spirit witnessed to your soul that you were born of God? Do you not know that even now, while you are yielding to gloomy doubts, that earth has not wealth enough to buy the hope you cherish that Christ is yours and you are his? “O thou of little faith, wherefore dost *thou* doubt?” Why throw away all these tokens of grace? How could you know what a cold heart is, if yours had never been warmed by redeeming love? How could you know what spiritual darkness is, if you had never known the light? O “be not faithless, but believing.” Shake off thy guilty fears. Leave thyself in Jesus’ care, and go to work in his vineyard.

The other efficient cause of doubting, which we find illustrated in the record concerning Thomas, is this :

He not only failed to give due weight and credit to the testimony which was presented to him, but he had gotten into a bad spiritual condition. Do you ask in what way? The record amply shows. Let us recall a few of its facts once more. Distinctly the Redeemer had assured him and his brethren that he would “arise from the dead on the third day.” He fulfilled his promise, and appointed a meeting with his disciples on the evening of that day. The evening came. The scattered band, with a single exception, were all present,

and to their overwhelming joy, their risen, triumphant Lord appeared among them. They saw him, heard him, and received a holier, richer benediction from him than they had ever experienced before. And what a meeting that was! Never in time did they forget it, nor yet in eternity has its blessedness faded from their memories. It was the new beginning of a new life, yea, it was to them "life from death." Not one of those present had a doubt or fear left. Nay, all doubts, all fears were for ever banished before the grand illuminations which burst upon them at that meeting.

But, alas! one man was absent from that meeting. *That man was Thomas.* O Thomas, Thomas, why were you not there? How could you absent yourself from such an appointment? Had you some worldly business to attend to, or did some trivial excuse detain you? Poor, weak brother, what a loss you sustained! Had you been where you ought to have been, had you filled your place among your brethren, you would have had the same evidence they had; received the same blessing they received; been as happy as they were; as free from doubt as they became. But you voluntarily neglected your duty, and you fell into darkness and doubts! Who wonders at it? No one can. The cause was adequate to produce the effect.

The same cause is producing the same effect throughout the whole Christian world to-day. Multitudes neglect the means of grace. Like Thomas, they absent themselves from the sacred places where the Lord

meets and blesses his people. At least half of the members of all our churches habitually neglect the weekly prayer meetings. Like our representative man, they lose the blessings those receive

"When heaven comes down our souls to greet,
And glory crowns the mercy seat."

They neglect the Bible and the imperative duties it imposes on them. Is it at all strange that, like Thomas, they become cold, dark, and faithless? Is it strange, that like him they become filled with doubts and fears? After an experience of sixteen years in the ministry, I give it as a fact within my own observation, that those who do habitually wait upon the Lord in the use of the means of grace, do not doubt, are not fearful and unbelieving, but enjoy a comfortable hope, a steady faith, and at times, at least, a "joy which is unspeakable and full of glory," while those who pursue the opposite course are filled with darkness, doubts and fears, even if they do not sink down into hard-hearted, worldly indifference. Brethren, this is, this must be so. The means of grace are the channels through which alone we may expect the flow of divine influences into our souls. They are of divine appointment, and can not be neglected with impunity. In them Christ meets us and communes with us. By them our faith and hope and love are nourished. If, therefore, we neglect them, we sin, we violate our covenant obligations, we bring darkness upon ourselves, we invite doubts, and make room for harassing fears.

A member of Rowland Hill's church, who had complained of doubts, and was living in entire neglect of his church duties, one day called on him, and said, "Pastor, I have got clear of all my doubts." Mr. Hill watched his course for a while afterwards, and seeing that he continued to live as he had, met him one day and sternly said, "Now, sir, you say you do not doubt any more for yourself, *I begin to doubt for you.*"

In conclusion, let me add *that the operation of this cause is not confined to church members alone.* There are conditions which are essential to the attainment of knowledge of any kind. This is true of a knowledge of business, of the world, philosophy, or science. So essential are they that no man can attain it who does not adjust himself to them. Precisely so is it with regard to religion. It must be sought in God's appointed ways to be found. And whoever will thus seek he shall find. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." Friend, are you destitute of a saving acquaintance with Christianity? Then, I beseech you, put yourself in positions, by the aids of established means, where God can meet you. Isaac's servant said, "I being in the way, he led me to the house of my master's brethren." Do you refuse to do this? Then, O then

"Weep not for broad lands lost,
Weep not for fair hopes crossed,
Weep not when limbs grow old,
Weep not for friends grown cold,

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Weep not that death must part
Thine and the best loved heart ;
Yet weep, weep all thou can,
Weep, weep, because thou art—
A self-deluded man."

VII.

The Religious Inquirer.

NICODEMUS,
The Religious Inquirer.

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"Acquaint thee, O mortal! acquaint thee with God,  
And joy, like the sunshine, shall beam on thy road,  
And peace, like the dew-drop, shall fall on thy head,  
And sleep, like an angel, shall visit thy bed.

"Acquaint thee, O mortal! acquaint thee with God,  
And he shall be with thee when fears are abroad,  
Thy safeguard in danger that threatens thy path,  
Thy joy in the valley and shadow of death."  
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To inquire, search after truth, is one of the most interesting exercises of which the human mind is capable. Your children never exhibit a more promising trait than when they develop a disposition to make inquiries, which sometimes leads them to ask questions which you find it difficult to answer. Nothing more dignifies a young man than the development of a spirit of investigation. No exponent better indicates the intellectual and moral condition of any community, than the degree in which this constitutes a characteristic. At no point in their history do the great minds of the world appear invested with such sublimity of interest, as when we behold them searching into hitherto unexplored realms after new truths. When is Galileo encircled with such interest as at the point where he commenced his inves-

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tigations by watching the oscillations of the old cathedral lamp, from which he was led on to such important results? or Newton, as when commencing his career of unparalleled brilliancy by the discovery of the principle of gravitation? or young Watt, as when, seated by his mother's hearth, his attention was directed to the steam which issued from her kettle, and the inquiry sprang up within his ardent soul as to whether that force might not be applied to purposes of usefulness—an inquiry whose results have changed the face of the world? All great discoveries have been made by inquiring men. They have been the world's intellectual pioneers, and have reaped in their own souls the virgin harvests of truth.

Such a spirit, however, is interesting in the ratio of the elevation and importance of the object toward which it is directed. He who is investigating an atom interests us somewhat; but how much does he who is endeavoring to reveal the secrets of a globe? So does he who is engaged in developing our material natures and necessities, but assuredly far less than does he whose investigations relate to our immaterial natures, their spiritual necessities, and the fullness of God's supply to meet them. The latter belongs to the province of religion, and is the specific work of the religious inquirer.

While, therefore, men occupy a noble position when inquiring in any department of the wide realm of truth, theirs is the noblest who intelligently seek to know religious truths, for it relates to the highest possible subjects—God and the soul, sin and redemption; because

it appertains to our highest, most enduring interests ; yea, interests which shall live involved in weal or woe when the earth shall have been wrapped in its shroud of flame, and during all the subsequent "eternal years of God." A man occupying this position I now present to you in *Nicodemus, the religious inquirer*.

As in an art gallery there are some full-length portraits, some half size, some busts, and others mere outline sketches, which latter, by a few masterly lines, indicate prominent and characteristic features ; so in the New Testament exhibitions of men, there are full and partial delineations of life and character. Our present subject belongs to the latter class. The place he occupies on the canvas is limited, but the drawing is perfect, the coloring is deep yet perfectly natural, and the sketch strikingly impressive.

The first thing concerning him which arrests attention is the *position which he occupied in society*.

He was a "ruler of the Jews," that is, he was a member of the Sanhedrim, the supreme council or court of Jewish national judicature. Many suppose that it was originally founded by Moses, and reorganized by Ezra, but the more probable opinion is that it was established by the Maccabees, or Asmoneans, who assumed the government under the title of High Priests. The room in which it convened was a rotunda, half of which was within and half without the temple. This may seem strange ; but are you aware that it was unlawful to sit in the temple at Jerusalem ? Hence the Sanhedrim, who wished to have the influence of the

holy place, to give force to their authority, built their rotunda half within it and half without. They sat, during their deliberations, in the part which was outside of the sanctuary. The president was called a "Prince," and sat upon a throne; his deputy bore the title of "Father of the House of Judgment," and was located on the right hand; his sub-deputy, seated on the left, was called "The Wise," and the members, seventy in number, filled the remaining portion of the semicircle. To be a member of this body was next to the highest positional eminence among the Jews, and therefore the following qualifications were requisite: it was required that a man should be of unstained birth, skilfull in the written and traditional law, acquainted with physic, astrology, mathematics and the languages; that he should not be a usurer, a gamester, or deformed, but of good personal appearance, mature age, and wealthy. The authority of this body, although much crippled by the Roman invasion, was at this time very powerful in Jerusalem, and had, in every town and city of Palestine, inferior councils, consisting of twenty-three persons each, which were subordinate to and controlled by it.

You perceive now, in the absence of any detailed account of the life and social condition of Nicodemus, how much concerning him we learn from the mere fact that he was a member of this august body. From this membership we know that he occupied a high position among his fellow-citizens; that he was of mature age, a man of culture and influence, possessed of wealth and reputation. Jewish writers make frequent mention of a

Nicodemus who lived during this period in the Holy City, was a ruler, and one of the three richest men in Jerusalem; so rich, they say, that upon her marriage, he gave his daughter "a dowry of a million golden denarii." But, they add, he subsequently became so poor that his daughter had to beg bread—a result plainly explicable upon the theory that he was identical with the Nicodemus of the New Testament, who, we believe, became a Christian, and if so, his property would be one of the very first objects of the confiscation which was general during the persecution which followed the death of Stephen.

The next thing concerning this man which interests us is *his position as a religionist*. Three sects at that time were dominant among the Jews. The Essenes, who were chiefly monks or hermits; the Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, rejected all traditions, and professed to receive the Old Testament; and the Pharisees, who were the most numerous, popular, and influential, tenacious in their adherence to traditions, and pompous in their almost ceaseless ceremonies. They fasted twice a week, on Thursdays, when they said Moses went up into the mount, and on Monday, when he descended. As a general truth, they were the most haughty exclusives in society; most arrogant in their pretension to superior sanctity, and sure to occupy the chief places in synagogues and at feasts. *Nicodemus was a Pharisee*; and from this fact you see how much light is thrown upon his character as a religionist.

At the time he is introduced to us, Jerusalem was agitated by a great excitement. Jesus of Nazareth, who had been heralded as the Messiah by John, the fame of whose miracles, the importance of whose claims, and the sublimity of whose doctrines, had spread through the land, exciting curiosity to its highest pitch, came to make his first official visit to the Holy City. The citizens were astounded at his first public act. It was a bold and daring one. Surrounded by a few poor followers, he had gone into the gorgeous temple, and finding it occupied by money-makers—men who sold oxen, sheep, and doves for the sacrifices—with a scourge of small cords had driven out the impious intruders, poured forth the changers' money, overthrew their tables, and, with a voice of indignant authority, said, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." The news of this bold deed quickly spread through the city; and our Lord followed up this first movement by a succession of miracles which confounded his enemies, greatly strengthened his friends, and awakened a general interest in his person and purpose.

These facts reached the thoughtful Nicodemus, and deeply impressed his cultured mind. Perchance while passing in Pharisaical dignity along the street, he has seen the mildly majestic form of the stranger of Galilee, and heard that voice which "spake as never man spake;" or, in other circumstances, has met and conversed with persons who themselves have experienced his miracle-working energy. It may be that he has

long been dissatisfied with the empty forms of his sect, and the general hypocrisy of its members.

It may be that in calm hours of meditation his heart has yearned for something purer, nobler and more satisfactory than its dead traditional dogmas. It is certain that he is familiar with the ancient prophecy and promise of a Messiah, and since the evidence of the miraculous power of Jesus has accumulated until it has reached the character of positive demonstration, he has not been able to resist the impression that it is at least possible, in spite of all opposing considerations, suggested by the poverty of his origin and humility of his surroundings, so unlike what the popular expectation anticipates, that this is Israel's deliverer. The arrow of conviction is in his heart, anxiety in his eye, and trouble on his brow. He can not feel the interest he once did in the business of the Sanhedrim. The peace of his gorgeous home is disturbed. His dreams by night and his thoughts by day all point to the Nazarene. He is conscious of a strange drawing toward him, until at length he feels that he must solve the mystery, ascertain the truth. But how shall he do this? He is not prepared to compromise his position by publicly attending the ministry of Christ, and after much reflection decides to go and see him personally, but it shall be during the night, so that if no good comes to himself from the interview, at least no harm shall come to his positional reputation. At this interesting crisis Nicodemus occupies a representative position, and while he is preparing for an interview with him who embodied not only a

divine nature, but the highest type of humanity ever seen in this world, allow me to digress for a moment, by calling your attention to the personal interviews of a few other representative characters, found on the pages of history.

Thus met Montezuma, in whom was vested the barbaric glory of the new, and Cortez, the representative of the hoary civilization of the old world. Thus met, on Scotland's storied soil, Sir William Wallace, the representative of her wild patriotic valor, and Robert Bruce, the embodiment of her ancient regal dignity. Thus met, in the garden of the Tuilleries, Mirabeau, the impersonation of the revolutionary spirit, and Marie Antoinette, the representative of fallen royalty. A similar meeting occurred, in an Italian dungeon, where Galileo was incarcerated, because he had affirmed truths which an ignorant and bigoted priesthood had pronounced heresy. One day a young Englishman, whose name is now familiar as a household word throughout the civilized world, was admitted to see him. That young man was John Milton, and that personal interview between Italy's martyr to science, and England's patriotic scholar must indeed have been thrilling. In them the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries met; the despair of the one and the hope of the other; the wasted night of the former and the opening morning of the latter. But the personal night interview we shall now witness between this representative of the dissatisfied and inquiring moral element in the universal human mind, and that wonderful personage who embodied

within himself an interest superior to a thousand Montezumas, or Cortezes, or Wallaces, or Bruces, Galileos or Miltons, possesses an interest vastly higher and more profound than these, or all similar personal interviews recorded on the pages of the world's history !

Resume now the thread we dropped. Nicodemus is determined to carry into effect his slowly-reached purpose. How he has discovered where Jesus tarries, in what street, in what building, I do not know ; but the day has dawned at whose close he is resolved to meet and make personal inquiries of the new teacher. Slowly pass away the tedious hours, until at length the sun has set and night ascends the throne of the world. It is April. The air is soft as that of our summer, and balmy with the perfume of oriental flowers. The Passover moon, which lights pilgrims to their far-off homes, now silvers the majestic temple, and flecks with deep shadows the white marble palaces of Jerusalem.

Gradually the hum of the busy city ceases, and places of amusement and business are closed. Wrapping himself in his costly robe, behold the ruler emerge, unattended, from his home, quietly thread his way through the silent streets, and proceed toward his destination. How his heart throbs ! how alert is every faculty ! and as he approaches the point where new truths of startling magnitude, of momentous, eternal interest are to burst upon him, I can not but believe that his own nature is intuitively conscious of the shadow of their coming. He reaches the dwelling,

enters it, and is ushered into a room, where, as if awaiting him, sits alone the great Teacher he has sought, who, recognizing him at once, as he did Nathanael before, kindly receives him, and with unexpected suavity makes him feel at ease in his mysterious presence. With the characteristic politeness of a cultured gentleman, Nicodemus commences the conversation by saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." Mark the immediate reply. It may seem strange to you, but rest assured that Jesus knows his guest better than he knows himself, and therefore he responds, "Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he can not *see* the kingdom of God." Surprised, the ruler asks, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Calmly the Saviour repeats, emphasizing what he has said, and adding thus to it: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Amazed and perplexed, the inquirer exclaims, "How can these things be?" In order to humble his Pharisaical pride, Jesus answers, "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these

things ?” And then, after a few words upon the difficulty of a man in his condition being able to comprehend these spiritualities, he proceeds in the plainest possible manner to open thus the gospel, by a reference to Jewish history with which Nicodemus was familiar : “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned ; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.”

Such is the whole record of this interview. We have no evidence that the inquirer uttered another word. The whole gospel scheme was placed before him, and his mind seems to have been stunned by the force of the aggregated, unexpected truths which came rushing in upon him. Silently, thoughtfully, he departed through the night gloom to his palace, certainly

a far wiser man than when he left, and I confidently believe that subsequently he became experimentally acquainted with the truth, which, with even unwonted fidelity, our Lord taught him. That belief rests mainly on two facts.

When, more than two years afterward, Christ was arraigned as a prisoner before the Sanhedrim, Nicodemus defended him there so earnestly that his coadjutors looked upon him with suspicion, and said, "Art thou too a Galilean? see to it." And after the crucifixion, when Joseph came to take down from the cross the dead body of the crucified Lord, the record says that Nicodemus came with him, bearing precious spices; and we are left to imagine what must have been his thoughts and emotions as he gazed upon that very form which sat with him alone on that memorable night, full of life and superhuman beauty, now pale, dead, covered with ghastly wounds and clotted with gore! Did he not remember the words which had fallen upon his ears so strangely, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also must the Son of man be lifted up"? And O, as he stood and gazed upon this literal fulfillment of these prophetic and now attesting words, must not his faith have been confirmed? Surely, he had faith in Jesus, else wherefore came he to Calvary when the execution was over? Wherefore came he there bearing spices to embalm that dead body? In all pictures of the crucifixion he figures conspicuously, and the highest art has made him a weeper at the sepulchre. If he did not do what he ought to have done, support

Christ's cause while he lived, he did do all he could for him when dead. From this point we see no more of him on the historic page, but I think there is ground for confidence that the subsequent events, the resurrection from the dead, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the success of Christianity, nourished the seed which had been planted in his soul by the divine hand, and that it brought forth fruit abundantly. This historic sketch of character suggests the following points, to which I ask your attention:

1. *Nicodemus acted the part of a candid, intelligent man, when he became an inquirer of Christ concerning the truth of Christianity.*

In proof of this, consider his position in relation to it. Christianity was brought within his reach, and it was either true or false. If true, it certainly was of the first importance that he should know it, for then it would stand related most intimately to his present duty and eternal destiny. If false, it was also important that he should know that, in order to intelligently repudiate its claims and successfully oppose its progress. How could he certainly know whether it was true or false without investigation? There were many circumstances in his case unfavorable to such an examination. Occupying a lofty official position, he had the responsibilities of his office to meet and all the prejudices of his own education to overcome. Moreover, the temptation to lay aside the troublesome question by accepting the declared judgment concerning it of those who were the most learned of his people, and therefore seemingly

the most capable of judging correctly, was such as would have been too strong for an ordinary mind, influenced too by all the power of self-interest. But, tell me, would it have been the part of a candid, intelligent man, to have allowed either the cares of private or public business, either his own or the prejudices of his associates, either apparent temporary interest, or any other consideration, to have deterred him from fairly inquiring into the claims of Christianity? Assuredly not.

Consider further *the manner in which he prosecuted the inquiry*. He did not form an opinion concerning Christ from what his enemies said of him, nor allow his judgment, as to the truth of his doctrines, to be influenced by the external circumstances surrounding the great Teacher—the fewness and poverty of his disciples, and the fact that they almost exclusively belonged to classes in society far beneath his own positional level. His love of justice and fair dealing—a noble development of which was made in the Sanhedrim when, during a consultation in regard to the course to be pursued with reference to Christ, he nobly said, “Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?”—forbade his doing that. Therefore he resolved personally to go to Jesus and hear from his own lips a statement of his doctrines. He resolved to go at a time when he knew he could see him alone, and therefore he went “by night.” Many have blamed him for this; but I beg you to observe that our Lord found no fault with him on this account, and I submit to you that we

ought not to. If it exhibited caution, and perhaps timidity, still you are to bear in mind that he was merely an inquirer, not a believer, and then judge whether it was not duty for him to pursue such a course with regard to what was in his mind an undecided question, since, if Christ had proved to be an impostor, the step he took would, if it were known, have brought disgrace upon himself and his position. Now, in this inquiry, and the manner of its prosecution, I affirm that he developed intelligent and manly wisdom. But alas! how seldom is Christianity thus treated! There are multitudes of men who never even trouble themselves to inquire whether it is true or not; who, immersed in business during the week, go to church on the Sabbath, but still have no settled, intelligent convictions in regard to that religion which they treat respectfully, and politely neglect. Thus they treat it with as much absolute indifference as they would if they knew it were merely an abstraction, an unreality, having no vital relation to their interests, and unworthy of their immediate personal attention. To become a religious inquirer, and take the time requisite to prosecute such an inquiry, in their view involves neglect of obvious duties, if not a betrayal of positive weakness. Is this manly, just, or right? Can it be that a system like Christianity, with its grand history, its authoritative sanctions, its solemn and momentous claims, is unworthy of the close attention and careful investigation of any man? Assuredly not. Such are blinded, deluded by the god of this world.

There are others who assure us that they have an

opinion, that they do not believe in Christianity, that they reject the Scriptures. We ask them, Sirs, have you ever for yourselves, laying aside all prejudice, candidly and thoroughly examined the evidences of the divinity of the Scriptures, and the Christianity they teach? Have you ever in your hearts said, "O God, I want to know the truth; if the Bible and its religion are true, I want to know it; if true, I will receive and obey them," and then assiduously availed yourselves of the means of knowing? In ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, such persons are compelled to answer in the negative. What then is their opinion worth? What is the value of the verdict of a jury who have not heard the evidence? Therefore it is that the wide-spread skepticism and infidelity of this age are the most flip-pant and superficial things the world has ever known. They are made up of ignorance, prejudice, and exploded argumentations. Their weapons are gibes and jeers. Their food is the faults of Christians. Their clothing is the filthy rags of self-righteousness. Tell me, now, is it the part of a candid, intelligent man thus to treat that religion whose claims have been sealed, not only by the blood of martyrs, but by that of the Son of the eternal God, which has ever been the herald of good to mankind, the originator and nourisher of private charities and noble public reforms; that religion whose claims to divinity have been satisfactory to the profoundest minds of the world, to men most eminent in every department of science; that religion which is the safe guide of wayward youth, the strong girder of manhood's energies.

the rectifier of wrong, the dispenser of light and love, the planter of hope in despairing hearts, the giver of joy to the sorrowing, of knowledge to the ignorant, and wealth to the poor ; that religion which is the staff of tottering age, the softener of dying beds, the illuminator of the tomb, and the opener of a heaven of immortal blessedness to poor, sinful mortals?

2. *In prosecuting his inquiry, Nicodemus discovered far more than he anticipated.*

Such has been the experience of all real investigators in every department of truth. You can not fail to remember that their biographies show that when they got upon the right track, and pursued it vigilantly, in almost every instance greater results were reached than they expected. It was while Swartz was making chemical experiments for a different purpose that he produced gunpowder, that terrible instrument of physical power, which has blown up kingdoms and exploded dynasties. It was merely an inquiry as to why an apple fell from its parent bough which led "the star-eyed Newton" to the discovery of the existence of that great principle which binds together the vast material universe. It was while Columbus was merely endeavoring to find out a new route to the Indies that his ship came in contact with a new, and before unknown world. Thus has it been also in the realm of intellectual and moral truth. Thus emphatically was it with our religious inquirer.

It is not difficult to see the exact attitude of his mind, as exhibited in the brief record of him in the

gospel. His attention has been arrested by the wonderful career of Jesus of Nazareth, and his curiosity is thoroughly aroused. He has felt a growing dissatisfaction with his own condition and position. Maturer experience and deeper insight have revealed to him the inefficiency and positive emptiness of those hoary dogmas and imposing forms of Judaism which enkindled and enchanted his youthful imagination. He is perhaps too cautious and non-committal, but he will see and hear for himself the new teacher. His motives are doubtless mixed. There is a blending of speculative curiosity, and perhaps ambition, together with an honest and determined desire and purpose to find out the truth. Observe the cautious and indirect manner in which he opens the conversation, its polite and apparently studied generality, as if he had merely called to make some general inquiries, and hold converse with our Lord, such as any other man might have deemed it a privilege to enjoy. *But he has placed himself in the right position, he has come to Christ.* He is alone with the great Revealer, and unconsciously stands where revealings such as he has not dreamed of can burst upon him. He has come merely to find out the truth concerning Jesus; he should learn the truth about himself. He whose calm, deep eyes are fixed upon him, with their majestically mild and searching gaze, knows him and his position thoroughly. Mark, therefore, the first words he utters. They are in no way responsive, but putting aside all secondary issues, he reveals to the inquirer the necessity of a new birth

in order to "*see*," that is, perceive, comprehend and enjoy the spiritualities of God's kingdom. Nicodemus gives proof of this statement by taking these words in a physical sense. But now he is told still more; for, after explaining that the birth is a spiritual one, Jesus adds that in order to "*enter*" his visible kingdom and enjoy its immunities, he must be born both of the Spirit and "*of water*;" that is, he must not only have a change of heart wrought by the Spirit, but by baptism make a public profession, and thus be publicly recognized as his disciple. The amazed inquirer learns still more that he did not expect, for Jesus revealed to him more clearly than he ever did to any other individual, or on any other occasion, the doctrine of atonement, and of salvation through faith in that product and method of the Father's love. It is indeed a remarkable fact, that it was during this private interview that our adorable Lord uttered to this astonished listener the most concentrated and yet comprehensive statement of the gospel found in the whole Scriptures. To him he said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thus he honored this inquiring man. And by the record of this, it appears to me evident that he designed to specially encourage all those who desire to know the truth to come directly to him. Just as he said, when on the last great day of the feast he stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." And, as a matter of fact, an experience similar to that

of Nicodemus has been realized by all those who have ever gone to Jesus, and sought honestly and earnestly to know the truth—*they have learned more than they anticipated*. They may have commenced, as he did, with but little consciousness of spiritual need and knowledge of spiritual truth; but, as they sought by faith, they found; as they knocked, it was opened unto them. Tell me, Christian friend, was not this your experience? You may have commenced seeking the Lord with a comparatively slight sense of your spiritual necessities, a poor apprehension of the infinitude of divine love, and of the wondrous adaptation of the gospel to your exigencies. But as you sought by prayer and study of the “word of Christ,” did you not discover yourself to be a more guilty, helpless sinner than you had supposed? Did you not discover the nature and reasonableness of those personal prerequisites to the comprehension and enjoyment of the spiritualities of Christianity, which before seemed almost as strange to you as they did to Nicodemus? Did you not discover a wondrousness in the grace of God, a beauty and glory in the person and work of Christ, an efficacy in his atonement, a reality and power in the work of the Holy Spirit, and a blessedness in Christianity of which you had not dreamed? Could you not say, with Sheba’s queen, “the half was not told me?” So, friends, shall it be with all of you, if candidly and honestly you will seek of Christ to know yourselves, your necessities, duties and privileges. Be not afraid to go, by humble prayer, to the omnipresent Jesus. He invites you to

come. He awaits your coming. The Spirit and the Bride say "Come." Go, then, as this inquirer did—go alone to Jesus, and you shall learn the truth; yea, you shall be amazed, as he was, at the magnitude and grandeur of the spiritual revealings which shall burst upon you.

3. *The difficulty of comprehending the nature and necessity of regeneration which Nicodemus felt, is the common experience of men.*

Remember that he was a ruler, a gentleman, and a scholar; a man of lofty and pure character; doubtless, amiable, kind, and benevolent. History records no blot as resting on his reputation. Indeed his standard of mere moral character was higher, than that which prevailed either in his class or nation. In this regard he was above reproach. Even Christianity, perhaps, could have made no very important change in his exterior life. In this regard, the all-knowing Christ uttered no breath of condemnation. But in true fidelity he at once informed him, that whatever might be his intellectual culture or moral integrity, he could not "see the kingdom of heaven" unless he was "born again." And how the immediate reply of the inquirer demonstrated the truth, Jesus had just uttered! He talks about a natural birth, and when his mistake is corrected, exclaims, "How can these things be?" Does not this remind you, of what you have often heard from intelligent and worthy persons? Have you not heard them say, "What is this new birth of which you are for ever talking? We do not understand it." Such speak

the truth. They do not understand regeneration, because, like a large class of other facts, *it can only be known by experience*. It is a change of heart, producing a change of will and conduct. How many changes of the body can only thus be known!—changes from youth to age, from sickness to health and health to sickness, from life to death. How many intellectual changes can only thus be known! Oh, in the inward world of our souls—that world within the vail of flesh, that sanctum sanctorum of humanity—how many realizations there are, which can be known only to those who experience them! Ought it then to be a matter of surprise that this most radical and permanent of all changes should be a thing known only through a personal experience? But while the nature of regeneration can only thus be known, its reality is demonstrable, as are other classes of facts, by its *effects*. How do you know that there is such a thing as wind? You never saw it; but you have seen its power exerted, and on that account you are satisfied in regard to its existence. Hence Jesus said, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Moreover, there was one word spoken by the great Teacher on this occasion which must have grated harshly on the ear of this man—the little word “*must*.” Nicodemus was not accustomed to be thus addressed, and his face doubtless flushed when he heard it. But calmly and firmly Jesus repeated, “Marvel not that I said

unto thee, Ye *must* be born again." In the pride of their hearts, men dislike this language now, as much as Nicodemus did then. The very form is obnoxious. It is so authoritative, imperative. It does not leave the matter optional. It does not merely advise that a change of heart is desirable, and that we would do well to seek it. Nay, but with the earnestness of a God, and the solemnity of eternity, the Revealer of truth declares to all, whatever may be their position or character, "Ye must be born again."

But observe *in order to what* he told Nicodemus this change was essential. He did not say it was essential in order to secure worldly good, nor to a form of religion, but in order to "see" and "enter" his kingdom on earth, and secure an interest in the kingdom of heaven. He taught that if there is no change of heart now, there will be no true religion here or bliss hereafter. Friends, does this appear to you to be an arbitrary arrangement? If it does, you are mistaken. It is a great moral necessity. It could not, from the nature of things, be otherwise. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" How can you love a holy God while you love and cherish sin? How can you at the same time love the world, and the world-crucifying Christ? How can you appreciate or take delight in exercises for which you have no relish? How can you be a loyal subject of King Jesus while in rebellion against him? How can you enjoy the companionship of regenerate souls with whom you have no affinity? Then think of the great hereafter—of

heaven. How sweet is that word ! It is the condensed expression of beauty, bliss, glory. All want to go thither at last. But do you know that heaven is a perfectly holy world, a purely religious place, a vast temple of incessant worship ? Do you know that all its inhabitants from earth are regenerated people, its joys are the joys of holiness, its songs are the praises of redeeming love, its activities are the sweet obedience of loving hearts ? Tell your own conscience honestly, if you were taken there just as you are, without a thorough change of your affections, would not its very air be oppressive, its services tedious, its employments irksome ? Could you sing its songs ? Could you shout praises unto him whom you have despised on earth ? Verily not ! That polluted heart within you would writhe amidst the blaze of infinite purity, and cry out, "This is not my place : I am a stranger to all these persons and enjoyments ; I am not adapted to them." Yea ! we may all sing in mournfully solemn tones,

"Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell,
One sin unslain within my breast
Would turn that heaven to hell."

Ah ! then the loving, faithful Saviour utters a grand moral necessity when he says to us, "Ye must be born again !" God give you grace to see it, feel it. God grant that you may now be impressed as you have never been before with this fact, so big with everlasting interest ; that whatever other experiences you may

have of joy or sorrow, of prosperity or adversity, you must, must have this. God grant that the words, "Ye must be born again," may ring in your ears and toll their solemn cadences through every avenue of your being until you cry out, "Holy Spirit! change my heart. Work thy work of grace in me." Then it shall be done, and thou shalt stand up regenerated, redeemed, disenthralled, in all the dignity and bliss of "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

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VIII.

The Lion.



ANANIAS,
The Liar.

~~~~~  
"Oh! unblest falsehood, mother of all evil,  
Thou art the misery making demon of the world.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Let falsehood be a stranger to thy lips;  
Shame on the policy that first began  
To tamper with the heart, to hide its thoughts!  
And doubly shame on that inglorious tongue  
That sold its honesty and told a lie."

~~~~~  
It is pleasant to discuss subjects which are adapted to excite emotional interest. Far different is the task before me now. I am about to treat of one which it is almost impossible should afford you pleasure, in the ordinary acceptation of the term; but with this fact distinctly before me my duty is clear.

Do we not, however, make too much of this matter of enjoyment? Does that which gives mere pleasure always benefit us most? Is what we most enjoy always what we most need? Does he who makes us temporarily most happy always do us the most good? Is the human mind in its noblest, highest mood, when merely experiencing gratification? Did you ever notice that the Scriptures never represent God as merely enjoying himself, but as possessed of every attribute

of goodness in an infinite degree, and constantly exercising those attributes for the well-being of his universe? and is not the human mind in its highest condition of excellence when in nearest approximation to the divine? As with the body, there are times when that which is unpleasant to the taste and produces severe pain, works greater positive good, lays a foundation for higher, more permanent enjoyment, than does the most delicious fare: so is it with our souls; there are periods when a contemplation of unpalatable but important subjects, subjects relating to our own deficiencies or sins, or the vices prevailing in community, which, though they may not afford immediate pleasure, still, in the end, do greater good, are better adapted to elevate the tone of our character and rectify our conduct, than other themes which are by far more pleasurable in themselves.

You will see the appropriateness of what I have said, when I announce as my theme, ANANIAS, *the Liar*.

In discussing this I shall have much to say about the vice of which this man was guilty, and with which his name is associated in the sacred history. You will pardon me, if pardon is needed, if I call this by its real name. I shall not choose mild words; I shall not call it by the gentle terms, "prevarication," "departure from the truth," or even "falsehood-making," but style it exactly what it is, "lying!" Our business, however, at the outset, is with this man, and the historical facts concerning him which the Bible has preserved for our benefit.

It falls in with a collateral object of these lectures to notice the *period at which he lived*, and the circumstances under which he appears in the connections of the sacred narrative.

The bloody tragedy of Calvary had been enacted. The resurrection from Joseph's new tomb had transpired on the third, the appointed day. Forty days afterwards, his earthly work being consummated, our Lord ascended from Olivet's summit in a cloud-chariot to heaven, bearing with him in his glorified body the scars of the atoning sacrifice. Ten days after that occurred the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Ghost upon the gathered and waiting disciples. At this time Jerusalem was full of strangers. There were Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. These were Jews and proselytes dwelling in those regions who had come to attend the great annual feast of the Pentecost. Public and private houses were filled with these strangers. Amazed indeed were they at hearing the apostles, whom they knew to be Galileans, preach to them in their own varied languages. Some, astonished, exclaimed, "What meaneth this?" Others mocked, and said, "These men are full of new wine." A vast crowd collected around them, and Peter—the very man who in an evil hour had thrice denied his Lord, but who was now the bold and dauntless preacher—heedless of their ridicule, arose before that mighty multitude and proclaimed to them a crucified and risen Christ, charged upon them the guilt

of his death, and proffered forgiveness through repentance. When his sermon was concluded, a murmur, slight at first, but gradually growing louder and louder, arose from every part of the vast audience. At length it burst forth in the cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do!!!" Then Peter, with the glow of holy triumph on his face, with a voice like a trumpet, responded, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The result of that sermon was, as you may remember, that three thousand men and women were converted and baptized that very day, and fear fell on every soul.

Now look at the *circumstances*. From embracing about six hundred, the Christian church in a single day came to number nearly four thousand souls, and subsequently received additions daily to its membership. According to a custom of the time, at great feasts in Jerusalem, like the one mentioned, there was always somewhat of a community of goods. No Jew stranger hired houses or beds, or household utensils; but these were freely offered by the inhabitants, as well as water provided for him at the public expense. But you can conceive how natural it was, from the deadly hostility of the city authorities to Christianity, for them to withdraw all hospitality from its converts. Such was the case. These were, consequently, thrown entirely upon their own resources. What, then, was to become of these thousands of converts, many of whom were doubtless very poor and far from their own homes?

With a truly Christian spirit, "those who had them sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need."

In view of this fact many have asked whether Christianity does not always require a community of property in Christian societies? The Shakers affirm that it does. But we deny their affirmation for the following reasons. *First*, neither Christ nor his apostles ever established such an arrangement. It was not *enjoined* in this case. It was but the outburst of Christian liberality to meet an emergency. *Second*, no primitive Christian society was organized on such a basis. It was practiced in no place, at no time but this. *Third*, it would be impracticable as a universal custom. Nor does Christianity contemplate such a merging of individual and social interests as such an arrangement involves, adapted as it is to destroy individual enterprise and family organizations. Still Christianity does, both by precept and example, enforce upon those who have property the duty of assisting any of their brethren who may be in circumstances of need.

Recurring again to the circumstances in which we find our representative man, we learn that "very many having sold their possessions, gave the money to the apostles," who with it supplied the wants of the needy disciples. Of all of those donors, the names of two only are recorded—one is Joses, surnamed Barnabas; the other is Ananias.

You have now before you the historical circumstances surrounding our representative man. Let us

next examine *what is recorded of him*. The record is brief. Immediately preceding it the liberal, honest conduct of Barnabas is described, who, "having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." Then, as if to show that there were bad as well as good men engaged in this service, the record proceeds from this account of Barnabas with an ominous "*But*." It says, "*But* a certain man, named Ananias, (it does not tell where he lived, nor what his business was) and Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet." Imagine, now, this man as having turned his possessions into money, and according to an agreement with his wife, keeping back a part of the sum, and bringing only the balance, *while professing to bring all*. He has laid this before the apostles, and waits complacently to receive their benediction. Look at him! What can be the matter? Why does he not gaze manfully up into their faces? Why does his cheek grow pale? What means that trembling of his whole frame? Something surely is wrong. See how the eagle eye of Peter is fixed upon him, seeming to pierce him through and through!!! How he quails under that searching gaze! Surely conscious innocence never writhes thus under either the eye of man or God; conscious guilt does under both. Hark! Peter speaks. His tones are low, deep, awful. His face betokens amazement and an almost terrible solemnity as he says: "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to

the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived *this* thing in thine heart?" Then I see him lift his hand, and I hear in his solemn voice the knell-tone of hopeless doom as he adds, "Ananias, thou hast not lied unto men but unto God!" Look now at the convicted liar. What agony his countenance betrays! How he trembles! Ah! he falls heavily to the earth. His body moves not. He is *dead*. While the beholders quake with fear, the young men, whose business it is to perform various offices at the assemblings of Christians, lift up the corpse, fold its flowing robe around it, carry it out, and as the Jews immediately interred dead bodies when not to be embalmed, they bury it. Three hours afterwards, his wife, not knowing what had transpired, came in, and, being questioned, told the same lie, met the same fate, and the same young men who, acting as bearers, had borne her husband to the grave, now carry and lay her by his side in a dishonored and premature sepulchre.

This brief but really terrible narrative is rich in practical suggestions. It will be profitable for us to candidly consider these. You observe the strange fact that *this single passage in this man's history is all that is recorded of him*. So that God has preserved for the world, through all time, this record of a *lie*, and its *consequences*. Can any one doubt, therefore, the propriety of my calling him Ananias, the Liar? Can any one doubt that he is a *representative* man? or that

God designed that this history should illustrate the fearful nature of that vice, which is perhaps the most prevalent of all vices, found in all classes of society, in all degrees of civilization, ramifying every department of life, from blooming youth to decrepid age?

1. We here see developed what constitutes *the essential nature of a lie*.

Where is the lie in this transaction? There are certainly points in it of themselves commendable, such as his apparent sympathy for the needy, which led him to turn his property into cash for the ostensible purpose of assisting them, and bringing the money to the apostles to be thus distributed. There was no necessity laid upon him to do either. No apostolic *command* had required it. The property was his own. He had a right to do with it what he pleased. After the sale, he need not to have laid a farthing of the proceeds at the "apostles' feet." But when he professed to bring all of the purchase money, while bringing only a part (and that probably a very small portion), he deliberately attempted deception, and that *deliberate intention* and *attempt to deceive* constituted the lie. This ever constitutes lying, *an intention and attempt to deceive*. What is truth? What is *moral* truth? It consists in an honest intention and endeavor to convey to another the conception of a fact precisely as it exists in our own minds. What is *physical* truth? It consists in an attempt to convey to another the conception of a fact as it actually exists. These do not always coincide. You may innocently have obtained an incorrect conception

of a fact, and honestly endeavored to convey it to another as it existed in your mind. In that case there would be a moral truth and a physical untruth, for you honestly told it as you understood it; you did not intend to deceive, and yet the thing was not really as you represented it. So, conversely, there may be a moral falsehood in the statement of a literal truth, as when you tell the truth, relate a thing as it really is, while you suppose it to be different and intend to deceive. In such a case, although you told the literal truth, not knowing it to be such, and intending to deceive, you would be guilty of falsehood. *Pure truth is communicated only when, having a correct conception of a fact, you intentionally communicated it to another precisely as it exists in your mind.* Just as the law has it, "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Every thing different from this, containing what this record ascribes to Ananias, intention and the attempt to deceive, is lying. It was on this account that Peter said to him, "Thou hast lied."

2. In the case of Ananias we have *developed not only the nature of a lie*, but also *one form of lying*.

It is astonishing to reflect upon the many forms in which lies are told. I do not know, however, that it ought to astonish us, for as truth appears in ten thousand forms of beauty and usefulness, so we might expect that the opposite should be as varied in its manifestations as are the developments of universal depravity. Harken to the list which the most thorough writer upon the subject has made out. I refer to "Mrs. Opie's

Illustrations of Lying," a book which I recommend as worthy of a place in every family library. She describes the whole subject with much ability, and presents touching illustrations of every form of this vice. The following is the catalogue she has prepared :

1. Lies of Vanity—which include all those false expressions by which persons attempt to deceive others in regard to what administers to their own vanity.

2. Lies of Flattery—which include all those efforts, by deceptive phrases, to administer to the vanity of others.

3. Lies of Convenience—which include all that class of falsehoods which are told to avoid being disturbed, or having our convenience in any way infringed upon.

4. Lies of Interest—which include all false representations made to promote selfish aggrandizement.

5. Lies of Fear—which include all false expressions uttered through lack of moral courage to tell the truth, through fear of wounding the feelings of others, or bringing upon ourselves the legitimate consequences of our actions.

6. Lies of Malignity—which include those expressions willfully intended to injure the feelings or reputation of others : all that large class included under the general terms of "backbiting," "insinuations," and other forms of detraction.

7. Lies of Benevolence—which include all falsehoods told to promote good objects ; and all deceptive withholding of the truth, when it is supposed that such deception will do good.

8. Lies of Wantonness—which include all those which are told through a foolish contempt of the truth, and a depraved fondness for inventing falsehoods.

9. Practical Lies—that is, not spoken, but acted out falsehoods.

Under this last classification we must place the sin of Ananias. Bear in mind that the record does not represent him as having uttered a single word. He did not say, “I give to you, apostles, all the proceeds of my property for the benefit of the poor;” that would have been an outspoken lie. But what he had not the courage to say, he did; the deception which he dared not put in words, he acted. Thus it is with us; when we intend by our conduct to produce false impressions, we are guilty of falsehood as really as he was.

Now, in regard to this vice, the prominent forms of whose development we have thus indicated, there are several astonishing facts to be noticed; such as its almost universal prevalence in some form, and the number and variety of excuses and palliations which are made for it, and mild names which are appended to it, and the wonderful skill developed in graduating its moral character. Hence we hear of “innocent, harmless” lies, “white” lies, “little, unimportant” falsehoods, when the fact is, that if there be the essentiality of a lie in a given transaction at all, then you might as well talk of innocent harmless sin, white, moral blackness, or little, unimportant guilt, as to apply these deceptive phrases to it. Another astounding fact in

regard to this matter is, that while, as I shall show you, the Bible abounds with denunciations against it, the pulpit is so silent in regard to it. I confess, to my mortification, when, after looking through my own sermons, upon almost every subject within the range of ministerial discussion, I could not find a single discourse upon this sin, nor could I remember ever to have made it a distinct topic of discussion. And I suppose that what is true of my ministry in this regard is also true of that of the mass of my brethren. Why is this? Why this apathy?—this compromise with a vice more prevalent than profanity, licentiousness, intemperance, or theft, and yet belonging to the same class of immoralities? Can this be accounted for except on the theory that we have not, for some cause, realized its injuriousness and guilt? Had we been duly impressed with these, we could not have remained silent. I submit to you that the evidence is clear that the God of truth has preserved this record of a lie and its consequences on the sacred page, that it might aid us in obtaining proper conceptions of the nature and guilt of this sin. I firmly believe that he did. Let us pass then to consider

3. *The guilt of lying, both as taught and suggested by this brief record of our representative man.*

Doubtless there was a special peculiarity attending this case not found in most others, but the essentialities of all lying are ever the same. That peculiarity is indicated by the expression, “Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” To understand this, you must remember that the apostles were acting under

the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. Ananias knew this, and yet he attempted to deceive them while acting under that inspiration, and therefore Peter said that he had "lied unto the Holy Ghost," whom, you will observe, the apostle calls "God," for he said "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Peter was a Trinitarian you perceive, for he thus recognized the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit, and told this man that the chief guilt of his crime was found in the fact of its criminality in the sight of God. All the peculiarity, therefore, of the lie of Ananias, consisted in the fact that it was specially against the Holy Ghost, under whose divine direction the apostles were acting. But all lies are sins against God, and consider, I pray you, what every such sin is in its direct relations to him.

1. *It is a violation of the law of veracity ; that law which demands perfect truthfulness from every being in the universe.*

This forbids the utterance of what is known to be false, the utterance of what we do not know to be true as truth ; the utterance of what may be true in such a way as to give false impressions, by exaggerating some circumstances and extenuating others, through which method a half truth becomes a whole lie. Therefore, every falsehood is a violation of this law, rebellion against this righteous enactment of Heaven, and a blow at the moral government of God.

2. *Moreover, it is in direct violation of express commands of God.*

I quote you some of these. Exodus, xx. 6: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor;" but every falsehood concerning a being is bearing false witness against him. Exodus, xix. 11: "Ye shall not lie one to another." Proverbs, vi. 16: "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile;" vi. 19: "The Lord hates a false witness that speaketh lies;" xii. 22: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." Of the prince of all evil our Saviour said, "The devil is a liar and the father of it." Ephesians, iv. 25: "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every one truth to his neighbor." Colossians, iii. 9: "Lie not one to another." In the description given by the ascended Lord of the spirit world, as recorded in the last chapter in the Bible, we read these emphatic words: "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever *loveth and maketh a lie.*"

3. *Behold its guilt as developed in its terribly mischievous results.* I refer not now to its punishment but to its legitimate consequences. What tongue shall tell, what pen shall write, what imagination picture these? Think you not, on the theory that up to this time Ananias had been an honest man, a shudder shook his moral nature when he deliberately purposed this falsehood? How its commission degraded every element of his nature, and covered him with shame!

And after the habit of falsifying has once been formed in any mind, then whatever of purity or beauty existed there before is gone. The moral sensibilities are blunted, the heart is hardened, the entire nature debased, and the individual appears contemptible in the sight of every honest man and woman. Tell me, are there many worse things that can be affirmed of a man or woman than to say of him "he is a liar," of her "she is a lying woman?" When this is done, not by the poisoned breath of private slander, but upon proof clear and indisputable, do you not avoid such persons? Do you not banish them from the sacred realm of social intercourse? Is it not one of the greatest insults which you can offer a true man to call him a liar? This vice is a clear exponent of character. Whoever will deliberately lie is essentially, and, it is to be feared, permanently ruined. Lord Bacon quotes Montague as having said, "If it be well weighed to say a man lies, it is as much as to say that he is a bravado toward God and a coward toward man. For the liar insults God and crouches to man." Aristotle was once asked, "What does a man gain by telling falsehoods?" He replied, "Not to be credited when he speaks the truth."

Think of its results in families and communities. What distrust, wrath, dissension, quarrels, and bitterness it engenders! How it changes friends to enemies, introduces broils and altercations into circles of business, politics, and religion; tears down the fair fame of its objects; blasts hopes and breaks hearts; yea, some-

times pursues to the death ! No wonder that a poet exclaims,

“ Oh ! unblest falsehood, mother of all evil,
Thou art the misery making demon of the world.”

4. Its guilt is seen *in the penalties which God's moral government has and will inflict upon liars.*

For the last time look at this record. The wicked design formed by Ananias and Sapphira, their deliberate purpose to lie, is consummated. What follows ? Both are detected, as all liars are sure to be sooner or later. Both are covered with shame. Was this all ? Nay, nay, one after the other, with the paltry price of the lie in their hands, they are stricken by the retributive power of God, fall dead at the apostles' feet, their bodies borne away to an ignominious grave, and their names consigned to eternal infamy. This was an extraordinary case, you may say, and met an extraordinary punishment. I admit it, but affirm that authentic history furnishes not a few instances of similar facts, where persons have met a similar fate in the very act of committing this sin. Consider attentively, I beseech you, the following developments of the penalty which a righteous God has annexed to this violation of his law. Psalm lxxiii. 11 : “ The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.” Proverbs, vi. 13 : “ These are six things the Lord doth hate : yea, seven are an abomination to him : a proud look, a *lying tongue*, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imag-

inations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren." Proverbs, xix. 25 : "The lip of truth shall be established for ever : but a lying tongue is but for a moment : lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight. He that speaketh lies shall not escape." In regard to the final doom of all who persist in the commission of this sin one passage in the New Testament will suffice. It is indeed terrible. Observe, I pray you, the characters with whom liars are classified, and the certainty and fearfulness of their fate. Revelations, xxi. 8 : "The fearful and unbelieving, the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all liars*, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death."

I close this lecture with an appeal to two classes of persons.

1. To parents. I beseech you to cultivate a love of truth and the hatred of a lie, as an essential part of the home education of your children. Such education is the earliest and most influential of all the instruction your children shall ever receive. It moulds their characters and shapes their destiny. And if you can, by the blessing of God, which is both proffered and promised to you, succeed in making them truthful, you thus lay broad and deep the foundation of a pure and lofty character. Why have the pyramids of Egypt withstood the assaults of centuries ? Chiefly because of the

breadth and strength of their bases. And so, also, shall our children acquire characters able to withstand all the stormy perils of life, if their bases shall be formed of unwavering truthfulness. To accomplish this *we must be perfectly truthful* ourselves. If we are ever careless in this regard, our children certainly will follow our example. As an aid in this momentous work tell them of the beauty of truth, the ugliness of falsehood; the blessedness of the former and the certain wretchedness of the latter; the eternal life-promises of God connected with the one and the eternal death-doom he has inevitably associated with the other. Tell them this story of Ananias and Sapphira. Tell them that the Almighty Jehovah, their Father in heaven, "loves children who will not lie."

Furthermore, we must encourage them to tell the truth. Even when they have done wrong, do not by severity drive them into falsehood, by endeavors to conceal it. Nay, encourage them to confide in you, and be willing to acknowledge the whole truth. O forgive, cheerfully forgive any childish folly, or even any more serious wrong doing, upon an honest confession of it. Let your little ones know you will do it. Let them see that no offense in your sight can approximate the meanness and guiltiness of lying. O, parents! it is better by far to have "children that will not lie" than to have pretty children or smart children. Such will assuredly be sources of comfort and consolation to your future years, blessings to society and to the world. God help us in this matter, for, as a general truth, they will be

just what our example and discipline are adapted to make them.

2. I appeal finally to all *young people*, whose characters are being formed, who have yet reputations to make. Friends, I beseech you, as one of the most important of all possible acquirements, study to attain a deep and abiding appreciation of the beauty of truthfulness and the loathsomeness of falsehood, the virtue of the former and the wickedness of the latter. I assure you that even a well-grounded suspicion that you will lie will undermine the confidence of all the good in you. I assure you, that the possession of no single or combined qualifications will secure for you such universal respect, as the knowledge that your veracity is impregnable. Are you a clerk, and does your employer require you to swerve from the truth? Look him steadily in the face, and tell him that if he would give you his whole stock of goods you can not lie. If he discharges you, and it is known that a poor young man has lost his situation because of his fidelity to truth, a hundred true men will interest themselves in your behalf, while God shall say, "Well done, noble youth." Should you be pursued by detractive opposition, you may exclaim,

"Put up your paltry weapons,
They edgeless are to him who fears them not;
Rocks have been shaken from their solid base,
But what shall move a firm and truthful mind?"

I charge you, friends, that no vice sooner stupefies the conscience than this. He who tells one falsehood

is in great danger of becoming an habitual liar, and an habitual liar soon loses all moral discrimination. One lie is a fearful sin in itself, but it rarely ever stands alone—it requires many others to prop it up, and soon involves in unexpected guilt. I assure you, that with the habit of stern, uncompromising truthfulness, you shall have a peaceful conscience, the respect and love of your fellow-men, and the unfailing favor of the God of truth; but that with untruthfulness in any of its varied forms, you shall have a hardened heart, a benumbed moral nature, the suspicion and distrust of all the good, the wrath of the Almighty, and, in the end, “shame and everlasting contempt.”

IX.

The Martyr Deacon.



STEPHEN,
The Martyr-Deacon.

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"When persecution's torrent-blaze  
Wraps the unshrinking martyr's head;  
When fade all earthly flowers and bays;  
When summer friends are gone and fled;  
Is he alone in that dark hour  
Who owns the Lord of love and power?"

"Or waves there not around his brow  
A wand no human arm may wield?  
Fraught with a spell no angels know,  
His steps to guide, his soul to shield?"

"Foremost and nearest to his throne,  
By perfect robes of triumph known,  
And likest him in look and tone,  
The holy Stephen kneels."

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THERE is one class of men whose connection with any enterprise gives to it the highest sanction, and helps more to spread and perpetuate its fame than perhaps any thing else. To what class, think you, do I refer? Is it composed of the rich or the learned? Of men of lofty positional eminence, statesmen, artists, poets or conquerors? No. It consists of *martyrs*—men who have proved their devotion to the cause they espoused by dying for it. In all ages and lands, amid all stages of civilization, from the rudest barbarism to the highest

refinement, the memory of martyrs has been held sacred, and real and traditional relics of their careers preserved with the greatest care. Indeed, the heroic element developed in such constancy and fortitude as they manifest naturally commands the admiration of their enemies and the profoundest love of their friends. Science has her list of martyrs, and, to-day, points with honest pride to the monuments which she has erected to keep their fame fresh in the heart of the world. Liberty has her long, long list of martyrs, whose names were not born to die—whose dust is found wherever she has struggled with her foes; and in the wreath which a grateful humanity has twined about her brow, the most imperishable flowers are the ones which have been gathered from the cherished graves of those, who have freely offered up their lives on her hallowed altars. Christianity, too, has her martyrs innumerable, yet glorious, whose remains are frozen in the ice of the North, mouldering in the sands of the South, beneath the whispering leaves of western forests, and beside the crumbling ruins of eastern antiquity; yea, in cold, damp dungeons, on bleak, desolate mountains, and in wild Asiatic jungles; while far down in ocean depths their white bones glitter through tangled sea-weeds. These form the crown of her earthly glory. These are the richest jewels in her earthly diadem. True, she has been able to preserve the names of comparatively few of them, and therefore she sings,

“The kings of old have shrine and tomb
In many a minster's haughty gloom;

And, green, along the ocean's side
The mounds arise where heroes died;
But show me, on thy flowery breast,
Earth, where my nameless martyrs rest!
They sleep in secret, but their sod,
Unknown to man, is marked of God."

Of this catalogue I can not tell you who is the last; nay, at this moment, crushed by despotic power, or murdered by lawless violence, some martyr man or woman may be breathing out their final breath. But I can tell you whose name, since the organization of the Christian church, stands first; I can tell you who, from that point, stands the foremost of this mighty army of martyrs. It is the representative man whose history and character form the subject of our present meditation.

To understand the history and character of this first Christian martyr, it will be necessary for us to review the record of the period in which he lived.

The effect of the retributive death of Ananias and Sapphira, the news of which spread like wildfire among the gathered thousands of Christians, was very great. The record says, "fear came on all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." But the apostles, as if they had received fresh inspiration, wrought with renewed energy "signs and wonders among the people;" and while the rich and honorable stood aloof from them through pride, the mass of the people "magnified them," and "believers were the more added to the Lord, both men and women." Deeper and wider

the excitement spread, until it dashed over the walls of Jerusalem and flowed to all the surrounding cities. The enemies of Christianity could remain quiet no longer. Through the influence of Caiaphas the High Priest, the Sanhedrim issued an order for the apprehension of the apostles. The command was obeyed, and they were arrested and cast into prison. But one of God's angels opened the prison doors, and bade them go into the temple and preach the gospel. Conceive if you can the amazement of those persecutors when the news was brought to them in the morning, that the men whom they had imprisoned on the preceding night had escaped, and, in opposition to their command, were preaching in the public place to the people. Speedily they were again seized and brought before the Sanhedrim, when the High Priest arrogantly asked, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled all Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

Ah, they thought that when they had secured the crucifixion of Christ they had put down Christianity; but now they find that his death has given life to his cause, and their guilty souls tremble in fear of the vengeance which his innocent blood calls down upon them. But Peter arises, and, addressing that august body with the calm dignity and heroic intrepidity of the true martyr-spirit, utters these immortal words, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." What a speech that was under the circumstances! Tell me, can this be the Peter who once in the presence of this same Caiaphas, quailed before the inquisitiveness of a servant girl? It is the same man, acting out his real manhood, permeated now by a divine religion. What, think you, was the effect of this intrepid speech?" They were cut to the heart and took counsel to slay them." Deterred from this, through the advice of an eminent lawyer, they merely scourged the apostles, gave orders that they should not speak in the name of Christ, and let them go. How, think you, did Peter and his brethren feel after this cruel scourging, and act in respect to this authoritative injunction? The record says, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." I have introduced this narrative to show you, at this point, the existence and operation of two antagonistic spirits. On the one hand the spirit of relentless persecution, on the other hand that which was prepared to brave even martyrdom for Christianity.

The record next opens to us an internal view of the church itself. Its numbers were very large, and were

made up of two classes: Hebrews, *i. e.*, Jews who lived in Palestine, and Grecians, *i. e.*, Jews elsewhere called Hellenists, who lived among the Gentiles and spoke the Greek language. Between these two classes a murmuring arose, because the latter affirmed that "their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations." This gave alarm to the apostles. They immediately called a meeting of the church, and laid the matter before that assembly, saying, "It is not meet that we should leave the word of God to serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." The propriety of this measure at once impressed the multitude, and they immediately chose seven men for this purpose. The first one, however, among all the gathered hundreds on whom the thought and the heart of the united church immediately fixed, as deserving the office of deacon, was *Stephen*, our representative man.

Although we have no previous record of him, what a volume this one fact opens to us in regard to him in his social relations, his character for honesty, integrity and wisdom, and his position among them as a Christian! Possessing the confidence and affection of the entire first Christian society, enjoying the personal ministry of the apostles, and encircled by the miraculous energy of the Holy Spirit, he seems to have been worthy in every respect of the distinguished honor thus conferred upon him. As a similar necessity exists in every church in every age, every regularly-organized

company of Christians have had, and will have their chosen deacons, but to Stephen will ever belong the honor of having been the first deacon of the first Christian church ever organized.

These deacons, with Stephen at their head, having knelt before the apostles, were, after solemn prayer, consecrated by the laying on of hands, and thus officially set apart to their important work. You now see the church fully organized and equipped for the war—every member fired with holy zeal to spread a knowledge of redemption through the blood of the lately-crucified man of Calvary, “and the word of God increased and the company of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith.” In the prosecution of this work, Stephen, like a true deacon, worthy of the responsible position to which he had been called, stood, prompt and efficient, by the side of his ministering brethren, and while the record does not tell us that he possessed great talents, it does say that he was “full of faith and power,” and did “great wonders and miracles among the people.”

During all this time the spirit of persecution had increased in bitterness. The increasing spread of Christianity aroused, rather than intimidated its enemies. Hitherto their animosity had only developed itself publicly in threats, imprisonments and scourgings of the disciples, but now it became irrepressible in its plenitude of wrath, and was prepared and determined to pursue, even unto death, its object. Then commenced a series of direful persecutions against Chris-

tians, which even papal malignity, reveling in the license of the dark ages, has not surpassed, the victims of whose ferocity were numbered by thousands. They began thus.

In Jerusalem there was a synagogue made up of foreign Jews from five different countries, who directed their opposition especially toward Stephen. They at first debated the great question with him; but this deacon confounded them in argument, insomuch that they were not able "to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake." Vanquished on this manly field, their pride wounded and their hatred increased, they determined on his death. To secure this they suborned witnesses, apprehended him, brought him before the Sanhedrim, and charged him with blasphemy. O! for an artist's power to depict that scene! Alas! I have it not. But you can see the malignant joy in the faces of those in that circle of maddened persecutors, as they glare upon their victim, now entirely in their power. You can see that unarmed, unbefriended, doomed deacon as he stands before them, conscious that his doom is near, conscious that he shall never more mingle with his brethren on earth; conscious that he is never again to hear the ripple of Siloa's brook flowing "fast by the oracles of God;" conscious that the perfumed breezes of Judea's hills shall never again fan his brow; conscious that the last tone of earthly love has fallen on his ear; conscious that the shadow of the dark wing of the death angel is falling on him, and yet standing calm and unmoved among those who pant for his blood.

But see! the persecutors, the lying witnesses, the judges are all amazed at something in the appearance of their victim. What is it? Look at him yourself. See! his face is radiant with a glory not of earth; a beam of eternal sunshine has pierced the black clouds and fallen on him, as did the light of heaven, descending upon Tabor's summit, pour celestial radiance on the face of our Lord, until his disciples were stricken down before its majesty, and therefore the record says that they "that sat in the council saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

The High Priest speaks. Addressing Stephen he asks, "Are these things so?" *i. e.*, have you blasphemed—do these witnesses speak the truth? The deacon prepares to give in what he knows to be his last testimony for Jesus. O! how grand is the repose of that mild yet firm face! How bright is the beaming of those eyes as they overflow with a holy, benignant earnestness! How significant is his whole expression of the unspoken cry, which is going up from his heart to his listening Master for help in this his last time of need! As he commences, I hear no weak faltering in his voice, I detect no evidence of a trembling, cringing spirit in his outflowing sentences. No; his tones are full and clear, his words are bold and fearless as, remembering the official dignity before which he stands, he thus opens: "Men, brethren, and fathers," and delivers that comprehensive address recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts. John Huss, arraigned before the tribunal of his enemies; Luther, confronting

the defenders of hoary error at Worms, come up before my mind while I listen to this defense, with their noble declarations of confidence in the same belief which Stephen boldly avows. Gazing upon him, my eyes grow dim with admiring tears, and all the sublimity of earth is forgotten as I grasp the full grandeur of the position he occupies before that august but guilty tribunal. Here my Saviour stood and felt the hot breath of hate scorch his cheek as the powers of darkness closed sternly around him; here prophets were encircled before and saints placed after him, and while the gathered testimony which this bar of judgment has evoked, surges around me and sways my soul, I listen to hear what the prisoner now arraigned shall say.

Sorry am I, that I have not time to quote his entire speech, to delineate in his own words the outlines and features of that noble lifetime, the career of the Hebrew nation which will ever be unparelleled in history, and to point out the train of thought running through the whole, and gradually gaining intensity and force until this burning climax is hurled forth, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." I can only refer to this, and proceed to the effect which it produced. See how keenly the re-

buke has cut them to the heart. They "gnash on him with their teeth," as the wolf, coward that he is, whets his sharp fangs in hungry ecstasy before he leaps upon his prey. And in contrast to their fiendish attitudes, look at the deacon. He does not return their gaze. He has done with them. He has no more to say. He knows his doom. He knows earth has no hope for him. He knows that he is as surely bereft of earthly assistance, as if he was within the ranks of heathen, before the secret tribunal of Roman vengeance, instead of being surrounded by his own fellow-citizens, those who profess to worship the God of heaven and earth. Therefore, he looks away from them to his only refuge and implores aid from heaven's King. Again, that unearthly glory beams from his face, as lifting his hands, which are soon to be paralyzed in death, he exclaims, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." At this his persecutors "cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord and cast him out of the city," where the perjured witnesses having removed their clothes and laid them down at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul, stoned him while he was kneeling down and praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and with his expiring breath, amid the shower of fast and heavy-falling stones, governed by the same spirit which imbued his Master when on the cross, he cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and the record says that when he had said this "he fell asleep."



Their bloody work accomplished, his murderers returned in triumph to the city, leaving the martyr's body bruised, mangled, lifeless in its gory bed beneath its covering of death-dealing stones. Think you that, meanwhile, the church had forgotten their beloved brother and deacon? Think you that they were ignorant or reckless of his danger? Think you, that as the crowd, emerging from the Sanhedrim chamber, hurried him along the streets and to the field of death, many Christian men and women did not mingle with it, and with sorrowing hearts watch even to the bitter end, and treasure up the memory of their suffering brother's looks and words and unquailing fortitude, sustained by visions of an opening heaven, revealing his Lord as having risen from his throne, approaching the very verge of the spirit land, and there waiting to receive the soul of his martyred servant the moment it left the body? Yea, verily. We read that "devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." Those men were doubtless the six remaining deacons, his brethren in office as well as in Christ; these were the appropriate persons to bear the loved body to the tomb, where, embalmed with the tears of the church, they left it to repose until the morning of the resurrection, when it shall rise in immortal beauty, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and, reunited with his soul, shall stand on the plains of glory amid waving palms, sounding harps and choral symphonies, recognized by angels and the redeemed as the first Christian martyr, recognized by Jehovah Jesus

as the first who, after himself, tasted the bitterness of a violent death for the gospel's sake. I present to you,

1. *A brief analysis of the character of this representative man.* It may interest you to know that many believe that he, like Paul, had studied law with Gamaliel, and that he was at this period about seventy-years old. Whether or not he was thus educated, it is certain that he possessed a strong and cultured mind. Consider one proof of this. I refer to that defense before the Sanhedrim. Remember he was charged with blasphemy against the temple and the law of Moses, whereas he had only asserted Christ to be the Messiah, and that if he was rejected the nation would be destroyed. He does not simply deny the charge, but in a most logical manner discusses this proposition: that from the beginning God had in view the dispensation now opening, and that his designs had been uniformly opposed by their impious forefathers. Study his demonstration of that proposition; the perfection of its arrangement, the accumulation of its argument and the tremendous force of its conclusion, and you will be convinced that he must have possessed vigorous intellectual power, and what every man, every Christian, and especially every deacon ought to have, great familiarity with the Scriptures. His possession of the elements of a high virtuous character among his fellow-men is indicated, by his elevation to the highest office in the church next to the apostleship.

Observe also the *type of his piety*. It was not a

large development of natural amiability. It was not a fierce fanatical devotion. It was an intelligent belief of the demonstrated truths of Christianity, together with a personal experience of their transforming power as applied by the Holy Spirit to his own soul. But he had not been satisfied with being a mere recipient of elementary Christianity, he had pressed along the bright pathway of Christian attainment until he reached the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Moreover, his was an *active piety*. He never seems to have believed that God converted him merely for his own benefit, to go to heaven on flowery beds of ease, or placed him in the church to enjoy without working or suffering. Nay, you see him ready to meet every call of duty, willing to sustain every burden. The church needed a deacon and chose him, and you hear of no begging off, no excuse, no declination, but a manly recognition of the call of the church as the voice of God, and a conscientious devotion to his duties as a helper of the apostles. You see him doing wonders in the cause of religion; demonstrating how much can be done by a willing heart and hands in the service of the Master.

And again, note well the *invincibleness of his courage*. He dared to meet and discuss the great question with the foreign synagogue. And when arraigned before the implacable ranks of the Sanhedrim, environed by the coils of deadly hate which had been winding about him, he stood as calm and unmoved as did his Lord before the same High Priest, not quite

one year before. And when dragged through the familiar streets he had so often traversed, past the market places where his name was known to all, past friends and acquaintances, past, perchance, his own home where his little ones were waiting for their father's return, surrounded by the jeering mob whose voices had yelled around the crucifixion, to that most fearful death—a death by stoning; knowing that escape was impossible and that unutterable agonies awaited him, you see no shrinking, but a fortitude like his Redeemer's, a magnanimity like that of him who, as a "sheep before its shearers" was dumb, a forgiveness akin to that which prompted the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In short, you feel convinced that he was one of those who, though

"Firm orbs convulsed, should all the planets fly,
World crush on world, and ocean mix with sky,
Yet undismayed would view the falling whole,
And still maintain the purpose of his soul."

Thank God for the record of such a man. Stephen's life left a glorious influence behind it among the Hebrew Christians, but did not end in those first ages of Christianity. It was inscribed upon the pages of the Scriptures by divine inspiration, that, side by side with the record of our Saviour's career, it might outlive the wreck of "empires and eras," and, like it, pass through the web of time a shuttle in the hand of God to weave the bright colors of virtue, of constancy, and of Christian triumph into the fabric of human souls, which is

to be unrolled and examined when the Christ shall sit on the judgment seat. So its contemplation affects us ; it elevates and expands the mind ; it exalts our conceptions of what our humanity may become ; it inspires us with ardor to attain to those altitudes of human character which we here see developed ; it magnifies the gospel and the grace of God ; it demonstrates the divinity of the Christian religion, and in our inner souls enkindles our love, inspires our hope, and invigorates our faith !

2. I desire you to study *this exemplification of the martyr-spirit.*

This spirit is the predominating element in Stephen's historic character. What does the term "martyr" mean ? Originally it merely signified "a witness." Hence, as all Christians were designed to be witnesses for Christ, in this primitive sense all were to be martyrs. But there were two ways of bearing testimony for the crucified Jesus : one by words and an exemplary life, another by suffering and dying for him. Soon the latter came to be the exclusive application of this term ; it was confined to those who bore witness for Christ by suffering ignominy and death for him. You can easily see, that it required a higher and stronger faith to enable a man thus to bear testimony, than was needed in the former case. Persecution was, of course, the occasion for the development of this spirit.

Commencing with the death of Stephen, the first great persecution of the Christian church raged at Jerusalem, until it scattered the thousands of Christians

there congregated, throughout Judea. During this only one of the apostles suffered—James, the brother of John. He was the first apostolic martyr. The second persecution, whose infernal machinery was set in motion by Nero, occurred at Rome, during which Peter and Paul were slain, and in which Christians were hung up at the corners of the streets, and burned to ashes to give light during the night. The third broke out under Domitian, A. D. 95; the fourth under Trajan, A. D. 145; the fifth under Marcus Aurelius, A. D. 177; the sixth under Maximian, A. D. 235. Persecution also ravaged the church in the years 249, 257, and 274. With the later cruelty of the papal power, who is the woman spoken of in Revelation, as “drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,” you are familiar. All these have in the aggregate, shed the blood of millions of Christian men and women. We call the periods in which the most of these occurred, “the dark ages,” and that is an appropriate name. Such deeds are the fit denizens of darkness, moral as well as physical. The spirit that animated Stephen and his numerous successors we call the martyr spirit. What are its elements?

1. A certain knowledge of the truthfulness of Christianity. No man will die voluntarily for that, which he does not know to be true.

2. A deep experience in the heart of the divine power and sustaining energy of the gospel, strengthening the will, confirming the purpose, making spiritual things realities, revealing the temporary and transient

nature of all earthly things, producing entireness of consecration to the will of God, and absorbing desire both to do and suffer that will, inspiring every energy of the nature with an enthusiasm not of earth—an enthusiasm embodying such lofty heroism that neither murderous stones, ravenous beasts, consuming flames, nor death in any form, is able to intimidate it. By this, faith becomes invincible, hope firmly grasps fruition, and love glows with the ardor of an eternal flame. Nor is this wild fanaticism. You do not call the martyrs of science, or the martyrs of liberty, fanatics, who have given up their lives for the good of those yet unborn. Why not? Because you know, that with those unselfish and heroic men the love of science and freedom was a passion stronger than the love of life. Why doubt then, that the far higher power and deeper experience of religion, the influence of the Holy Spirit, could, in a similar manner, enable Stephen, the deacon, and millions of others, to do for Christ what He did for them—willingly die? What to a Christian, with such attainments, is death, with all its most terrific pain, but a release from earth to the eternal glory of heaven? Nothing can be more ennobling to humanity than this spirit; for in its holy trust in the great unseen realities of God, it calls forth and develops the noblest powers of our being.

Over whose death hovers a more transcendent glory than that, which illuminates the features of one who gave up all for the truth? A martyr's character is the ideal of unselfishness? You talk of the glory of

a warrior's death, whose couch is broken spears and slaughtered men—the debris of the bannered host, which writhed beneath the steps of carnage. But fierce hatred and desire for blood raged in the dying fighter's bosom; reason's voice was unheard amid the roar of conflict within and without. History tells us that when the great Cæsar was assassinated, he first gazed upon the marble countenance of Pompey, and then used his last strength in arranging his robes before he fell, that he might lie with becoming dignity in death. It tells us that Nelson, when commencing the battle of Trafalgar, in which he lost his life, said pleasantly, "Now for a peerage or Westminster Abbey." But there is in neither of these instances that of the heroic element, which is worthy to be compared with that developed in the death of Stephen, who, without resistance, died with a heart full of love to God and man, with a prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies on his lips, with his vision fixed upon Christ, and his spirit resigned to the God who gave it. O death, glorious and peerless! Earthly fame grows dim in its luster beside thy triumph!

Has the martyr spirit left the church? Are there none now among the millions of Christians who, if called, would thus seal their testimony? It is to be feared that many of us would shrink in the hour of trial. Alas! instead of the martyr spirit, we are too much filled with the world's spirit. Sometimes we even complain of the crosses which we now have to bear, the paltry sums we pay, the little demands upon

our time which our religion makes. We might prove cowardly witnesses if tested to the extreme. But, blessed be his name, our Master has a remnant according to the election of grace. You will find a few scattered through all Christian churches, who could and would endure the trial. The reason is that such have more religion than the rest of us. They are like Stephen, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," and it is my firm conviction that should persecution again rage, should Christianity again need men and women to bear testimony for it with their blood, needed grace would be given, and many, very many, who now seem weak and trembling, would go boldly to the stake and welcome the flame-shroud and chariot of fire for Jesus' sake. Sure I am, that among our missionaries there have been, and are plain developments of the martyr spirit. O, ascended, triumphant Jesus, bless thy church with more of it! In conclusion I remark,

1. *How glorious is a martyr's reward!*

Think once more of this deacon, as with dying eyes he saw Christ waiting to receive him, as after death he was welcomed to heaven. Who shall describe the exceeding greatness of his reward as he received the plaudit, "Well done," from the lips of his King and heard it echoed by all the hosts of heaven? You remember that in the sublime visions which were opened to the apostle at Patmos, he saw some who were nearest the throne, and asked, "Who are these?" And the answer was, "These are they who have come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made

them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God. They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Transcendent destiny—what Christian heart does not pant for it? We are not called to suffer as Stephen did, but we may possess in essence the martyr spirit, which will enable us cheerfully to endure the trials to which we may be subjected, and meet dangers to which we may be exposed; faithfully to perform the duties which may be assigned to us in our respective spheres, and then a reward similar to his in nature, if not in degree, shall be ours. Ever remember that our love for the truth, may be always determined by our willingness to suffer for it.

2. How precious is *the legacy of influence which this class of witnesses for Christ has left to the church!* It was said of old that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." Time continually confirms this statement.

"It is not shed in vain—

The blood of martyrs! from its freshening rain
High springs the church, like some fount-shadowing palm;
The nations crowd beneath its branching shade;
Of its green leaves are kingly diadems made;
And wrapped within its deep embosoming calm,
Earth sinks to slumber like the breakers deep,
And war's tempestuous vultures fold their wings and sleep."

Mythology relates that Cadmus sowed dragons' teeth in the soil, and from them sprang a race of warriors, fierce and irresistible. A more benignant harvest has attended the implanting of such holy germs as we have contemplated; the early and the latter rains have fostered the plants that grew from such seeds as Stephen's death, and the fruit which is thus to be borne to the great Husbandman can only be estimated, when he shall gather all his wheat into his garner. They who have given up life for their Master have been blessed indeed! They have won for themselves a triumphal entry to heaven, the richest love of their Redeemer, and a place "nearest the throne." They have realized the desire of their hearts, to do much for Jesus; for their enemies have often been confounded by their fortitude and thus led to the cross; and they have achieved what men during all time have held to be of more value than life—immortal fame; for their existence on earth and departure from it, have been and will be regarded by the mass of mankind, as is the career and disappearance of the sun held in remembrance during the night, by those whose life is yet glowing from the sustenance it has afforded. And who shall compute the value of their influence upon succeeding ages? Ah! it has been the richest legacy of the sacramental host, whence they have drawn strength in hours of weakness, hope in hours of despair, courage in seasons of discouragement. It has been and ever will be one essential element of their glory, a pledge and precursor of the great triumph of their cause.

3. We learn from the Scriptures, that *a deeper relation than those which we have contemplated, exists between the death of martyrs and succeeding ages.* We learn that they will not only be productive of ever increasing rewards to the sufferers, and of permanent and benignant blessings to the race, but that they will be avenged. John says in Revelation that he saw "the seven seals opened, and when the fifth seal was opened, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." When the day shall come that shall witness the last stage and the end of Time's journey,

"—— When time itself shall cease,
And final ruin's desolating peace
Enwrap this wide and restless world of man;
When the Judge rides upon the enthroning wind,
And o'er all generations of mankind
Eternal vengeance waves its winnowing fan;

when the earth shall have completed its weary cycle of sin and sorrow, and shall roll back into the sunshine of purity which bathed its form before it had entered upon its awful orbit of aberration, all of us, as we look

back along the perspective of earth's eventful career, which has witnessed the grandest of the works of our God, and shall stand unparalleled in the annals of eternity, shall have reason to say that the blood of martyrs has been demanded at the hand of their enemies, that vengeance has been satisfied; and as we mark the long list of such murders engraven in the book of justice gradually being effaced, as retribution pursued its course, until not one remained to cry out for vengeance, we shall to the imploration of Milton,

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,"

reply that, the Lord God of Sabaoth has wiped away all the indignity which has been offered to his cause, and gloriously fulfilled his pledge and promise to avenge the sufferings, of all those who have gone from earth through much tribulation.

X.

The Moral Young Man.



THE . NAMELESS

Moral Young Man.

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"Talk they of morals? O, thou bleeding love,  
Thou giver of new morals to mankind,  
The grand morality is love to thee!"—YOUNG.

~~~~~  
"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

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As introductory to a discussion of this character, I direct your attention to an interesting fact. *It is more than probable, that our Lord Jesus came in personal contact with representatives, of every phase of human character now found among men*; and it affords a most profitable study to observe how he adapted the same elementary truths, in different forms, to each of these developments of the same fundamental character.

For instance, he met some men who were using a religious profession as a cloak to cover up their moral deformities and conceal their base purposes, and to them he administered the most withering rebukes, whose culmination is found in that terrific sentence, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" He met others who were giving themselves up to oriental ease and sensual indulgence,

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and to them he said, "If any man will be my disciple let him *deny himself*." He met oppressed toiling and sorrowing ones with no reference to self-denial, but with the sweet invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He met others, who were wearing out their lives, utterly neglecting their spiritual interests to gain transitory possessions, with the unanswered question, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" He met privately, at night, the high-minded, polished Nicodemus, who sought in the most polite manner to know the general truth concerning his religion, with the personal appeal to his own moral necessity, "Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." A nobleman came to him imploring the life of his son, saying, "Come down, ere my child die." In that expression I hear a heart-groan, I see a scalding tear in every word. To him he replied merely—recognizing and appreciating his faith—"Go thy way, thy son liveth." Many came, professing to be willing to follow him, but desiring to first go back and attend to their worldly affairs. To them he said, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven." When the tower of Siloam fell and buried many beneath its ruins, and people gaped with unholy horror, supposing that those crushed ones must have been extraordinary sinners, he said, "Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell ye nay; except ye repent

ye shall all likewise perish." To Zaccheus—despised because of his occupation and character—who climbed up into a tree to see him, and whose guilty heart yearned towards Christ, amid the crowd of Jews, he said, "Zaccheus, come down, for this day is salvation come to thy house. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." While to other penitents he said, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

A careful analysis of these, and similar illustrations will develop two things. The first is, that while the expressions are different in each case, *the same fundamental truth* pervades them all. The second is, that Christ addressed to each, *that expression of truth which was adapted to his particular case*. In the representative man before us at present, we shall find a still different phase of character from any we have yet contemplated, as well as different treatment from any before referred to. And I hope, that this view of the general course pursued by the Saviour, will prepare us to understand the reason of his peculiar mode of treating the case, we are now about to study.

The time, when the interview between our Lord and this man occurred, was during his journey from Perea to Jerusalem, just after the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and probably not more than two weeks before the crucifixion. It would seem from the narrative, that not only the fact of the closing up of his earthly career, and the anticipation of the baptism of suffering awaiting him, which filled his mind, and soon after forced him to exclaim, "How am I straitened until it be ac-

complished," but preceding events had combined to produce a tender state of his sensibilities, unusual even to the sacred heart of our Lord. Immediately before this record, we have the account of children being brought to him for his blessing, at which, strange to tell, the disciples were displeased and rebuked them; but he, the child's friend, laid his hands on their young heads and uttered those immortal words which have thrilled through the hearts of parents ever since, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." The next person whom he met was our representative man.

Who was he?

1. He was a *young man*, and as such was an object of special interest to the Saviour. I do not remember that in all the New Testament, we have any record of an interview between Christ and a young man, excepting this, which is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I do not doubt, that our Lord's heart rejoiced as he saw a young man coming towards him, in the bloom of whose cheek, the brightness of whose eye, the eagerness of whose expression, and the elasticity of whose step, he saw the freshness of a young life not yet hopelessly chained to earthliness by long-cherished habits of sin, not yet petrified by carnality into insensibility to spiritual things, the direction of whose forces was not yet ultimately determined; for whom there was, as there is in the case of every young man, hope that he might receive correct views, imbibe and adopt pure principles, experience true emotions, and live to

bless the world, perfect his own complex nature, honor God and secure heaven. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the record says, "Jesus loved him."

2. He was a young man *occupying a high position in society*. He was a "ruler," a member of the great national council, the Sanhedrim. This fact gives proof that he possessed a character eminent for ability and rectitude; for, with all their faults, the Jews elevated no man to office, who did not possess qualities deserving of the distinction.

3. He was a *rich* young man. "He had great possessions," which were, doubtless, inherited. This shows that he had been bred in the lap of luxury, and it is an extraordinary thing for such a young man to think of any thing beyond the present world. Wealth, which is inherited, unearned by him who possesses it, is apt to pamper pride from earliest consciousness, give no stimulus to energy, and make fools and dolts of men and women, by causing them to consider themselves superior to common humanity. It is apt to lull their higher natures into sinful repose, so that in very many instances they never awake to the lofty solemnities of being, but waste all the time given to them in gliding through the ecliptic of hollow, superficial, fashionable routine, which is but another name for the smooth, whirling maelstrom, whose vortex is eternal death. The case before us is interesting, therefore, from its novelty. With all his wealth, and high social and civil position, this man has awakened to a consciousness that beyond these present sublunary things there is a supe-



rior, eternal good to be sought and obtained. His illuminated soul-vision has looked into the vast future of existence, compared with which the present is but a mere point, and realizing that within that dark, limitless expanse, as within the waste of ancient night, rested the material of the earth that was to be, all in wild yet plastic confusion, so that future contained the certain locality of a state, which he must construct from the elements now preparing in his own heart, under his own supervision. His mind has seen, that it is wise to exercise carefulness and judgment and prudence *now*, in order that he may inherit "eternal life."

In your imaginations reproduce the scene. See this rich young man "running" to Christ, kneeling at his feet in the path and lifting up his heart in one impassioned cry, "Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" What cares he for the gaping crowd? What for the curled lip of the scorner? What cares he who sees him, or what any one says of him? He has grasped the idea of immortality, realized the fact that eternal life or eternal death is to be his portion. He yearns for life eternal. Noble youth! High-minded young man! He has risen above the low level of carnal things into his proper atmosphere, and become imbued with nobler desires, as the eagle, soaring for the first time above the shadow of the mountains, feels the unobstructed light and untainted air, quickens his pulse into a strong healthy throb, and dilates his eye into full-orbed power. The high elements of his manhood are stirred into vigorous action, and as he

kneels there at the feet of the Saviour of men, tell me, does he not look like a true man, is he not now every inch a man? Does he not think as a man ought to think; feel as a man ought to feel; kneel where humanity ought to kneel, at the feet of the incarnate God? You may consider his riches, his honors of much importance, but I tell you that these dwarf into insignificance before the true manhood he develops in the position which he now occupies, and the utterance of the question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" But while kneeling there Jesus looks him through and through at a glance, and in order that the ruler also may see himself, he says, "Why callest thou me good?" He means, "You believe me to be only a man. You intend merely to compliment, by applying to me a term which belongs only to God." He by no means disclaims his divinity, but rebukes the flattery embodied in what the ruler had employed merely as a complimentary expression. Then he adds, continuing the probing process, words that he never used on any other occasion of which we have account, "Thou knowest the commandments," indirectly asking, "Have you observed them?"

Now bear in mind Christ's object. He saw that this man did not feel himself to be a sinner. He did not, therefore, intend to teach that any man would be saved by keeping the commandments; but he meant to convict this young man of guilt which he did not feel. Hence he cites those portions of the law which were especially applicable—the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 5th

commandments. A ray of hopeful joy beams on the ruler's face as he exclaims, "All these have I observed from my youth." Ah! that ray of hope dies away, his countenance falls, pale dejection is visible on his brow, as Jesus slowly but firmly answers, "One thing thou lackest;" and looking with his calm, earnest, loving eyes still more intensely into the listener's face, he adds, not denying the claim he has made to legal obedience, "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come take up the cross and follow me." Look at the effect of the application of this test to the young man. His decision is taken, he rises from his knees, and uttering no word, turns his back upon Christ; sorrow is depicted in his face, and he departs "grieved," quickening his steps the further he goes, but never once looking back. The disciples stand appalled; not a man in the crowd scoffs, not an idler there hoots after him. All feel that he has approached the crisis of his life, and in shrinking back from the conditions of eternal life, has determined the destiny of his soul. All feel that he loves his possessions more than God and heaven; that his obedience to the commandments has been of their letter and not of their spirit, that his morality therefore is only a superficial thing, it is merely sublimated selfishness, which could not stand the test to which Christ subjected it. And now he has gone, and Jesus breaks the silence with the mournful exclamation, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" With

this brief record before us, let us attend to some of the thoughts it suggests.

1. I submit to you, that the question this man asked ought to be *honestly and earnestly asked, by every man.*

What does it involve? Let us analyze it.

1. A conviction that he possessed an *immortal nature*; a nature which should survive the wreck of his body, yea the wreck of all physical worlds, and exist when time itself shall be no more. How such a conviction, when deeply felt, exalts a man! How much more truly great does he appear, when asking this question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" than "What shall I do that I may enlarge my possessions?" A man expands not into the bloated form of self-conceit, but into the strong, healthful maturity of the soul, when the idea of his own immortality, and its possible circumstances of happiness, pours its noon-blaze upon him. It enables him to stand on that lone summit, which commands the prospect of both sides of the grave, where he may place a just estimate on present transient things, and weigh correctly the comparative importance of his mortal body and his immortal soul, of brief, rapidly-passing time and unending eternity.

2. The comprehension of the truth, that *continued existence is not, in its highest sense, life.* Life, in this highest sense, is existence in conditions of developed, active, happy being.

'It is not all of life to live,  
Nor all of death to die.'

Hence the phrase, "eternal life," is used in contradistinction to "eternal death;" the former signifying existence in glorious conditions, the latter expressing existence in the most acute forms of suffering. This young man well knew that he would exist for ever; that the physical forces which could in a moment crush his body, could not harm his spirit, but he also knew that the mere assurance of existence in the great future by no means guarantied to him, all that is wrapped up in the idea of eternal life. Indeed, the conviction of eternal existence made him solicitous that it should be spent in conditions, which would make it desirable. Hence he wished to secure, if possible, that which would insure to him this great good. Was not this wise? You say to young men, "Look out for the future; lay not your plans for the present only, but let them be formed with regard to the contingencies that may yet come marching down upon you, from out of the darkness that ever rests on the path you are pursuing." And why should we take precautions for only that which lies between us and the grave, and neglect entirely to care for the infinite vastness, the unending future beyond it? You say, "Young man, be not content to merely exist among your fellows, but aim to live a high, useful, blessed life." Why not also say, "Be not content with the mere fact of immortality, but strive to secure a noble, happy eternity of life."

3. A true understanding of *the connection between duty and destiny*. He did not believe in universal salvation that all men are to meet with the smiles of

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their God without regard to their character. He can not be numbered with such as adhere to this doctrine, for they never ask as he did, "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" The question itself is a denial of their whole theory. They say with respect to our future existence, "No care is to be entertained for it. God is too good to punish his creatures. His infinite love will impel him to bestow eternal life on every man, whether it is sought by him or not. There is no cause for anxiety or alarm." Not so thought our representative man. He could see, aside from revelation, that there is now a connection between conduct and consequence, as the instinct of man has led him to bestow rewards upon the virtuous and punishment upon the wicked, and he knew that the moral government which established that relation and that principle here, extends to moral beings everywhere, and is eternal as God, and that it must therefore exist in eternity as well as in time. Nor are the sentiments of these modern theorists confirmed by the great teacher. In reply to this question, did he say as men reply now, "There is nothing to be done; you are sure of a happy immortality, for all will obtain it?" Nay, he recognized the relation which the question involved, and laid down clearly what the young man must do. Failing to do that, our Lord gave him no hope, and permitted him to go away with no offered compromise or alleviating suggestion. If he could have spoken what such theorists affirm to be the truth, would he not have done so? Think you not that Jesus, whose heart was ever full of

love and sympathy, as he saw the wretched youth depart so sorrowful, would not have told him to smile, to drive away his tears, for eternal life was his as well as the portion of all, if it were true? Yea, verily. And yet men call the doctrine which is here sanctioned by our Lord partialism, and repudiate it because, they say, it makes people sad. For the same reason they should direct their hostility towards the events of every-day life, for it makes a lazy man unhappy to tell him that he will starve if he does not work; it makes a drunkard miserable to tell him that he must give up his cup or die, and sink to a drunkard's doom, and it causes a wicked man to turn pale, to tell him that he must give up darling sins or suffer the penalty of the law. Analogy, therefore, disproves the belief that militates against the lessons of this narrative, and reason and the Bible declare, that there must be an eternal connection between conduct and destiny. If we deny this connection, we admit not only that there are no rewards of virtue, but that Christ was a false teacher.

4. *He thought himself* willing to do that which might be necessary, to gain this eternal good. Doubtless he was in earnest. The fact of his coming in haste, kneeling down before Christ and asking this question, proves that he thought that he was willing to comply with any requisition. And he ought to have had such a disposition. We ought also to have it. What will men not do to obtain present good, even though they know that it must all be surrendered after a few years—money, office, fame, pleasure—and they must lie

down and die? When they know that they can carry not one cent of their wealth, not one leaf of fame's laurel into the spirit world! What would you not do to save your natural life? "All that a man hath will he give for his life." And yet that which you consider so valuable must end; compared with the life of the soul it is as a moment to millions of millions of years. Why should we not then be willing to do any thing, however humiliating to our pride, to secure everlasting joy, riches and honors, and all the fullness of good concentrated in eternal life?

So much about this question. The point before us is, that every one should honestly, earnestly ask it, for what was true of this young man is true of you. The same immortality is before you; the distinction between existence and life, the connection between conduct and destiny, relates to you as really as to him. Have you asked the question to which he gave utterance? Have you ever knelt before God and imploringly cried, "What shall I do?" Young man, young woman, have you from your heart asked this question? or are you merely inquiring how you may get money or pleasure? O! in view of the urgings of your conscience, your sober reason, the Bible, and your kind, loving God, will you not ask to-day, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" What is earth to heaven, vain, hollow earthly joy to the immortal pleasures at God's right hand, that it should prevent you from adopting this language in a proper spirit?



*2. Consider, what Christ here teaches to be the condition of eternal life.*

Bear in mind whom he is addressing. It is not a penitent sinner, it is a representative of that class of men who pride themselves upon their own goodness, morality and general integrity, and flatter themselves that they have "kept the commandments," and think that, on that account, they are not sinners, and need no change of heart. But amid their protestations, it is evident that selfishness reigns within them, not in its coarse, gross forms, perhaps, but in forms which exclude the supreme love of God from their souls, and lead them to live for themselves and the few they love; selfishness, which fosters the pride of their hearts and makes them satisfied with themselves, feel no duty to repent, no need of regeneration, and reject totally and firmly the Lord Jesus Christ, turn away from his invitations, and dare to risk their immortality upon their self-righteousness. Such a man, as if to make assurance doubly sure, did come to Christ, in the case before us, and accordingly the Saviour made a revelation to him and to the world of the fact, that selfishness in the form of inordinate attachment to wealth reigned supreme in his breast, and led him to seek his own interests without regard to the will of God or the good of others; and yet he seemed to be unaware that such was the case, for he said; "What lack I yet?"

In the answer which Christ gave to him, "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou

shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross and follow me," was a *literal obedience expected*? I answer, suppose that such was the case, what then? Was that too much to ask? Had not he done much more than that? Did not "he who was rich yet for our sakes become poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?" If, therefore, he intended its literal acceptance, he only said to the young man virtually, "You are rich, so was I; nay, infinitely richer than you. You occupy a high station, so did I, one infinitely higher than yours; and I have sacrificed all this for the glory of God and the good of men. Go thou and do likewise. I only ask you to do what I have done. I am bearing the cross, do you bear it also." Was this unreasonable? Again; *suppose he had literally performed the requirements of the Saviour*—sold his possessions and gave to the poor; filled a thousand destitute houses with comfort; made a thousand widowed hearts to sing; clothed, and fed, and educated a thousand poor children, and then taken up the cross and followed Jesus in the pathway of benevolence, tell me, would he not have been a greater, happier, nobler man than he was after he had refused compliance with the requisitions of Jesus, and determined to live for himself? Would not his example have been a brilliant beacon through all subsequent ages? Would not his name have been blessed and loved, by the Christian heart so long as the Bible shall endure?

Look now at *the historical circumstances* of that period. In less than thirty years the Romans took Je-

rusalem, desolated Judea, impoverished the more opulent classes, and so persecuted them in the Holy City that they were cut off by millions. Those in Judea who had followed Christ took the warning early, and fled to Pella, in the mountains of Galilee, and were thus not only saved from a fearful death, but retained a competency to subsist on. As this young man was a ruler, and very rich, he could not, if living, have escaped the Roman scourge: all his property, and probably his life, was sacrificed. So you see that, even if Jesus intended his test to be complied with literally, it was best for this man to have accepted it; for he would have lost nothing valuable: it would have been a good investment to have laid up his treasure in heaven, for there no thieves, national or individual, can break through and steal.

But whether he meant this literally or not, it is certain that at least his meaning was, "You ask 'What lack I yet?' I answer, 'One thing; thou lackest my spirit, that spirit which will prompt you to sacrifice your selfishness for God's glory and man's good; that spirit which will lead you to follow me, bear my cross, and live for the interests of my cause. This is what, with all your virtues, you need—the great central element of holy self-sacrificing benevolence. This one thing you lack; if you possessed it, your character would be faultless, but without it you are beggared for all eternity.'" This was too much for the young ruler; he would not accept such terms; he turned away from Jesus, and in doing so set his face directly toward the

gates of eternal woe. He clung to his selfishness ; and methinks that as he left, Shame, with downcast face, Sorrow, with tearful eyes, Remorse, all haggard and wild, Despair, calm and cold, went with him, and haunted him ever afterwards. Sure I am that when he came to death, they formed a horrid circle around him, and with their black, loathsome wings shut out from his sight all glimpses of joy, and hope, and heaven ; and that he must then, if never before, have felt how foolish he had been in not obeying Christ.

*And to-day, Christianity demands substantially the same thing of us, as our duty and as the condition of the eternal life, which it promises.* Ah ! how many there are, kind, amiable, honest in all their earthly relations, to whom Christianity says, "One thing thou lackest." They can not feel guilty of sins which some others commit, for they have not committed them. They know that they would not do, what they see many professors of Christianity doing ; they feel that they are above many of them in general character. And they really are. No man can say to them, "You have lied to me or about me ; you have cheated me out of a cent ; you have been guilty of low, mean conduct ; you have failed to meet your engagements ; you have been guilty of immorality." Such men are often abused by preachers. They feel that they are misunderstood and not appreciated. They are just where this young man was. Jesus treated him kindly ; he loved him ; he did not charge him with crimes he had never committed ; but admitted all that he claimed. And yet he

said, "One thing thou lackest." And you see that he was destitute of it. O! friends, this is just what you lack. Do you not know that you lack supreme love to God; that if you have not been outwardly wicked, you have not loved God with all your heart, and mind, and strength; you have not served him, nor lived for his glory? You have, alas! lived for yourselves, your own gratification; you have called yourselves and all you have your own; the "God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." You have not repented of heart sins, of which you know you are guilty; you have not received Christ as your Saviour; you have not taken up your cross and followed him; you have treated the dear, suffering, loving, pleading Jesus with utter neglect, and acted as if he had no claim on you and you no need of him. Tell me, is it not true that each of you have made yourself your own Saviour and turned your back on him? See you not that, granting you all you claim, as Christ did this young man, you lack this one thing, and, lacking it, you are, like him, destitute of a well-grounded hope of eternal life?

Behold then the requisitions:

1. Such love to our God as will lead us to consider ourselves, and all we have as his.
2. To be willing to do with ourselves, and our possessions whatever God requires.

He does not ask a man to literally sell all that he has, but *to be willing* to do so; to resign absolute own-

ership, and acknowledge him as owner, and himself a steward of the Lord's property.

3. To deny ourselves of whatever is inconsistent with duty to God, and take up the cross, and follow Christ in the path of duty which he exemplified.

Do you say, "This is too much to ask—the task is too great, I can not do it?" But ought you not to love God supremely? What of life, talent, health, property have you that you have not received from him? Do you not need a Saviour? Is the cross of self-denial, good doing, and Christian duty, that Jesus bore, unworthy of you? Is the creature so great that the example of his Creator deserves not to be followed by him? But, brother, sister, however it may impress you, such are the irreversible conditions of obtaining eternal life. They may make you sad and sorrowful, as they did this young man, but I can not help it; they are the words of my Master and not mine. He spoke them when on earth, that they might peal through all the ages which he was about to construct in the future; and to-day you hear their trumpet sound, as he intended you should, and while your soul blanched as the solemn notes strike it, O! remember from whose lips they have come, and pay respect to their import for the sake of their Author!

Moreover, this question bursts from the heart of the Christian past and the Christian present, "Why not give to God the heart he made and endowed with power to live? Why not resign all we have to him and use

it for him? Why not accept Jesus, who was crucified for us, to be our Saviour?" Does your desire for pleasure prevent you from thus acting? No one can be so happy as he who has "both the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" who is an heir of the promise of an hundred fold of all that is really good on this earth, and after that eternal life; who can look around on all the excellence of this beautiful world with holier feelings than the emotion of genius, and say, "My Father made it all; it belongs to him, and so do I." Whose heart, when the ear, taught by faith, construes the music of the wind into organ-tones chanting the anthem, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," now in the wild crash and roar of its full might, and anon in the gentle breathings of summer zephyrs, and echoes back from all its sensibilities, Amen and amen.

Who can have such just cause for joy, as he who has in Jesus a friend to console him in hours of sorrow, support him in hours of misfortune, guide him in hours of perplexity, go with him through the valley of the shadow of death, and give him a starry crown, a victor's palm, an imperishable inheritance in heaven?

Does the love of riches, the ambition to amass wealth, hold you back? Christ says, "Thou shalt have treasure in heaven." That treasure is greater than earth can give. With a moment's reflection you would not restrict the term "treasure" to money; you know that a mind at ease, a sense of innocence, freedom and power are regarded by you as in the highest degree valuable,

whenever you obtain a clear perception of their worth ; and of such treasure is heaven the storehouse. More abundant and more enduring, are the riches amassed there than those which time encloses. And, what is certainly deserving of consideration, wealth invested in heaven is secure from contingencies bearing ruin, which is so much dreaded here. Who, then, is the *richer* man of the two, a true Christian or a sinner ? And also remember, that however much you may selfishly cling to property or pleasure now, the time will come when all must be given up, must be surrendered, and you do nothing but die ; that, therefore, how strongly soever you may retain them now, your grasp will yet be broken. Ah ! will it not enhance the agony of the death hour to have this double separation, your spirit torn from its home in the body, and your heart's idol snatched away from the embrace of the spirit ?

But do you not see, that if by grace you give them up in your hearts now, consecrate yourself to God and follow Christ now, death will lose its sting ?

Two facts may impress these remarks upon your mind. They have occurred under my own observation. Near the field of my ministry lived a man of the highest moral character, respected as a citizen and loved as a friend. But he discovered that, with all his morality, he lacked one thing. He saw that he had failed to love God supremely, and that he had violated all the claims which his duty to him had presented ; that while he prided himself in his morality, he was rejecting Christ, and in reality full of self-righteousness, and



therefore full of selfishness. With a full consciousness of these facts, he was led by the Holy Spirit to repent of his sins and accept Jesus as his Saviour. He consecrated his all to his Lord, and took up his cross and followed cheerfully in his footsteps, those prints which the feet of our Redeemer have planted in the soil of humanity, which lead through the wretched hamlets of poverty, over the desert plains of self-denial, up the rocky ascents of toil and sorrows, and even to the agony-crowned summit of the cliff of death. But he was not required to traverse the whole of this trying pilgrimage. A sad accident checked him immediately after a happy marriage, when life seemed to promise all of joy his sanguine expectations demanded. He was bitten by a rabid animal, and received the terrible curse of hydrophobia. Terror seized his young wife and his relatives. But when the horrid spasms ended, he said to his friends, "If it is God's will, I want to live; do what you can for me, but if he has otherwise decided, I am ready to die. I am his, all I have is his, let him do what he will." The physician told him that he must die. He received the intelligence calmly, repeating his willingness that the will of the Lord should be done, and his assurance that he was in the hands of a faithful Creator. After making all the arrangements necessary in regard to his worldly affairs, he bade adieu to his weeping wife, his aged mother, and a circle of sorrow-stricken friends, who "stood in awe the while," as they marked the light of heaven growing brighter on his face, and his eyes burning with unearthly fire as the

radiance of celestial things kindled them, and heard his last tones forming themselves into silvery syllables of love to Jesus, and exhortations to those around him to love him also, and

"Then saw in death his eyelids close  
Calmly, as to a night's repose,  
Like flowers at set of sun."

This is an instance of one, who complied with Christ's conditions and consecrated his all to him. And do you not see how easy dying became? If he had selfishly clung to earthly things, he would have been torn away from them at last, and how much better it was for him to have given them up when he did, and receive the spirit of Christ, the hope of the gospel, and a title to an inheritance that passeth not away, than to have retained those transitory things, and been shut out from eternal joy in heaven above!

I have known another man. Respected as a citizen equally with the one I have just mentioned, and beloved by his family, he also "lacked one thing"—he would not love God supremely, he would not recognize himself as a steward in the Lord's employ; he claimed his property, loved and used it as though it was absolutely his own. He, too, came in the full vigor of manhood to—where you and I will also be found at some time—a death-bed. One day he asked, "What do people say of me?" He was told, "They say you must die." At this announcement of doom awful grief and fear were depicted on his face. He flung up his

thin arms wildly, and exclaimed, "O God! O God! I am not ready to die!" But Justice alone was looking at him from the heaven he addressed, and sternly confronted him with no pity in his eye and no weakness in his arm. He became delirious, and death closed up his mortal career before he had an opportunity of seeking salvation.

O man, my brother, O woman, my sister, I declare to you that the conditions named by the gospel are as easy as they can be, consistent with our own good. Our selfishness ought and must be sacrificed, for if not it will be our ruin. It contracts now our noblest powers, narrows now the sphere of our usefulness, and will yet add the sharp, inextinguishable agony of the spirit to the pain of the body, when the deathbed receives us, and robs us of eternal life, if it is not crushed in the bud. Christianity supplies the great lack of our souls, for its great object is to kill this terrible evil. It places us in our true relations to God and our fellow-men, and enables us to fulfill high destinies in the life which we spend on earth. True, it takes away our self-righteousness, but it gives us instead the righteousness of Christ; true, it offers us a cross, but with it is given grace to bear the cross, and beyond a crown of richest glory; it humbles us, but only to lift us up for ever; it demands that we give ourselves and all we have to God, but it gives us in return ourselves and all we have for the highest purposes; more than that, it gives God himself to be our Father, Christ to be our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost to be our regenerator and

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sanctifier; it gives victory over sin, death and hell; it gives us immortal wealth, pleasure and ever-increasing glory. What say you? I come in Jesus' name and ask, whom will you serve? It is a case of life and death. Let that mysterious jury, which your Maker has impaneled within your own mind, sit in solemn deliberation upon this question. God, angels, devils and redeemed are looking upon you, all await your decision, and rest assured that it shall be to you either the first toll of the bell that is to ring your dirge for ever, or the opening notes of a song of joy which eternity shall listen to

“When this generation of the universe  
Shall have been gathered to its grave.”



XI.

# The Almost Christian.



A G R I P P A ,  
The Almost Christian.

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" Child of sin and sorrow,
 Filled with dismay,
Wait not for the morrow,
 Yield thee to-day ;
Heaven bids thee come
While yet there 's room ;
Child of sin and sorrow,
 Hear and obey.

~~~~~  
" Child of sin and sorrow,  
    Why wilt thou die ?  
Come, while thou canst borrow  
    Help from on high :  
Grieve not that love  
Which, from above,  
Child of sin and sorrow,  
    Would bring thee nigh."

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THE gospel record associated with this man's history is so interesting that, preliminary to what I have to say of him, I will briefly sketch it. Impelled by the Spirit, Paul had hastened by sea and land from Philippi, in order to reach Jerusalem at the time of the Pentecost, and after a successful journey he arrived in the Holy City, was joyfully received by the brethren, and on the subsequent day, at their request, he rehearsed to the assembled elders what God had wrought by him among the Gentiles. After seven days had

elapsed, during which he had given proof of his fidelity as a Jew to Jewish law, a violent storm of persecution broke out against him. It commenced thus : certain Asiatic Jews, filled with malignity because of his advocacy of Christianity, seeing him in the temple, excited the people against him, expelled him from it, cruelly beat and were about to kill him. The soldiers, however, came to his rescue, and conducted him to the castle of Antonia, from the stairway of which Paul addressed the crowd in the Hebrew tongue. His speech was an able and ingenuous account of his life and conversion, but instead of soothing, it only the more irritated his enemies, who cried aloud, " Away with such a fellow ; it is not fit that he should live ! "

To appease them, the officer had Paul bound and was about to scourge him, but having discovered that his prisoner was a Roman citizen, he immediately loosed him and sent him for trial to the Sanhedrim, which was then in session. Deeply interesting is the picture of Paul before that august but guilty tribunal, which had devised and secured the death of his Lord ; before which, through his own personal agency, the martyr-deacon, Stephen, had been arraigned. Keenly gazing around upon the circle of dignitaries who thirsted for his blood, he calmly said, " Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience until this day. " You may conceive of the malignity that raged in the bosoms of those whom he addressed, when I inform you that immediately upon the utterance of this opening sentence of his address, the High Priest interrupted the apostle,

and commanded those "that stood by to smite him on the mouth." This outrageous indignity and palpable illegality, aroused every element of Paul's great manhood, and, although standing there alone and unarmed, he courageously exclaimed, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall, for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" At this terrible rebuke, Ananias sank back in silent confusion, and the prisoner was allowed to proceed, but he had not spoken long before he discovered that part of his accusers were Pharisees, and part Sadducees, and by skillfully introducing the doctrine of the resurrection, concerning which these sects were at perpetual variance, he divided their counsels, and secured his own release; but fearing that now the mob, incensed by being baffled a second time, would tear him in pieces, he returned with the military escort to the castle. During that evening, forty Jews bound themselves by an oath "that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul." Poor wretches! if they had kept their oath, they must have starved to death, for they never laid their hands upon him.

News of this conspiracy was brought to the castle by Paul's nephew, and because of it the commanding officer, at nine o'clock that night, sent his prisoner, under the protection of four hundred and seventy soldiers, to Antipatris, which was thirty-five miles distant, and the next day, guarded by seventy horsemen, he was taken to Cesarea, twenty-five miles further, where Felix, the governor of Judea, resided. Five days afterwards the

High Priest and his associates came down from Jerusalem, bringing with them a famous lawyer, Tertullus, to conduct the prosecution against the prisoner before Felix. Upon the trial, however, Paul proved himself superior to the Jerusalem lawyer, not only in intellectual power, but in knowledge of the law, and vanquished him upon the charges of sedition, heresy, and profanation which had been falsely brought against him. And more than even this, he secured the favor of the judge, who was a bad man but an intelligent functionary, who afterward heard him preach, and was so affected that he "trembled" before the proclamation of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." From motives of governmental policy, however, Paul was retained as a prisoner during two years, when Festus having been appointed governor in the place of Felix, his enemies brought the old charges against him before the new governor, and although they failed to prove them, still seeing no prospect of release, Paul appealed to Cæsar, and Festus said, "Unto Cæsar thou shalt go."

At this point, Agrippa appears on the historic scene in the following connection: Festus has promised to send Paul as a prisoner to Rome for trial; but if he does so, he must also send official documents, containing an indictment and an outline of the convicting proof. He is unable to do either; and yet the appeal having been made by the prisoner, and having been granted by the court, he can not now release him, and is greatly troubled at his own singular position. What shall he do? See what occurs. Just at this trying

emergency, Agrippa, king of Chalcis, and his beautiful sister Berenice, come with great pomp to Cesarea, in order to visit Festus, and congratulate him upon the dignity, to which he had been elevated by Nero.

Let me tell you just here, all I have been able to learn about this king. He was the son of Herod Agrippa, and therefore a great-grandson of Herod the Great. When his royal father died, he was at Rome with the emperor Claudius, but on account of his youth no office was given to him. On the subsequent death of his father's brother, Agrippa the Great, however, he was elevated to the kingship of Chalcis, and upon the death of Claudius, Nero added largely to his domains. Although a Jew by birth, still, having been brought up at Rome, he became strongly attached to the Romans, and his government was marked by a clemency and justice rare in those times.

It was during the height of his power, and regal fame that he came to visit Festus, and where, in the purpose of an overruling God, he was to meet a greater than Festus—to hear truths affecting his immortal destiny which he had never heard before—to witness a scene combining more moral sublimity than his royal eyes had ever beheld before—to experience emotions such as he had never felt before, and to get nearer to heaven than, alas! we fear he ever did afterward. During this visit, Festus informed Agrippa of the predicament in which he was placed; told him, with apparent carelessness, “of a certain man left in bonds by his predecessor,” against whom the chief priests had

desired him to pronounce sentence ; but that, after examination, he had found that there was no political charge brought against him ; nothing, indeed, " but certain questions of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul said was alive." He further told him that the prisoner had appealed to Rome, and that he had granted the appeal ; but that he could specify no charges of a character that the government would take cognizance of. On hearing this, the curiosity of Agrippa was aroused. He had often heard about the new religion, of the strange story of the crucifixion, and the affirmed resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. He had heard, too, of the man of Tarsus, the proud Pharisee, the cultured scholar, the persecutor of the disciples of Christ, who had himself strangely become a Christian, and been preaching Christianity with wonderful success all through the land ; and now, by a singular coincidence, he found himself at Cæsarea just in time to see and hear this famous preacher. It was arranged, that on the morrow the prisoner should be summoned before the assembled court.

That morrow has dawned, and the appointed hour has come. The splendid audience-chamber is in grand order for the royal reception. The governor appears in his robes of office ; Agrippa, clad with kingly regalia, and Berenice, dazzling in her queenly beauty and rich attire, follow him and take the elevated seats, overhung with Tyrian purple and bespangled with Roman emblems of power and grandeur, which have been prepared for them. Immediately the high officers

of the Roman army, the civil magistrates, and others of high repute enter and take the places assigned them, and the order is given for the appearance of the prisoner.

Remember now, that although Festus is a Roman, Agrippa is a Jew—a great grandson of the glorious Mariamne—and therefore he is acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, the promise of a Messiah; he knows that Jesus of Nazareth professed to be that Messiah; he knows the history of the prisoner who is coming in, what a strict Pharisee he had been, how high he had stood at Jerusalem as a scholar and defender of Judaism, what zeal he had manifested in the persecution of the followers of Christ, and that by having become a Christian himself he had sacrificed every thing, thus giving the most conclusive proof of his sincerity. Imagine now the intensity of Agrippa's curiosity, to see and hear this extraordinary man! There is a momentary confusion among the crowd at the door, as soldiers lead in the chained prisoner, and place him before the court. All eyes are fixed upon him. He is pale but calm, and there is about him the air of a cultured gentleman, blended with martyr meekness and heroic firmness never before witnessed in a prisoner at that bar. The crowded chamber is silent as the house of death. Festus opens the proceedings by an address to the king and the assembly, in which he informs them, that the Jews declare that this man ought not to live, but having found, in the preceding examination, nothing worthy of death, and the prisoner having appealed to Cæsar, he was embarrassed because he could specify no

crimes ; that he had therefore brought him before them, and especially King Agrippa, in order that by a new examination some definite charges might be made out. Agrippa then, looking kindly upon the prisoner, says, " Paul, thou art permitted to speak for thyself." This is all the persecuted apostle desires. And immediately stretching forth his manacled hand, he proceeds with his defense, which the best judges pronounce superior in its general eloquence and convincing truthfulness, to any thing of the kind found in the records of the world's jurisprudence. Not having space to quote it, I give you this brief analysis of it. First, he describes the manner of his life before his conversion, details his character as a Pharisee, the bitterness of his opposition to Christianity, and how he " verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Next, he relates the manner of his conversion, and how Christ called him to preach the gospel which he had despised, with reference to which he exclaims, " Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision ;" and then, having given an account of his life since he became a Christian and a minister, as he proceeds to demonstrate that ancient prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, Festus interrupts him with the exclamation, " Paul, thou art beside thyself ; much learning doth make thee mad !

Undisturbed by this insulting accusation, with the politeness of a gentleman, the firmness of a man and the dignity of a Christian, the prisoner replies, " I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of

truth and soberness; for the king knoweth of these things, before whom I speak." Then, turning again toward Agrippa, in whom Paul has seen the marks of sympathy from the moment he entered the presence-chamber, and with the vast energies of his mighty soul wrought up to the highest pitch of lofty and concentrated excitement, and lifting again that chained right hand, while he fixes his piercing but now tear-moistened gaze upon him, he exclaims, "King Agrippa! believest thou the prophets?" He waits not for an answer, for, with exultant joy, he sees conviction on that royal countenance, and, in a voice of mellowed triumph, shouts, "I know that thou believest!" Do you perceive Paul's victorious point? Agrippa does believe the prophets, he must therefore see the fulfillment of their prophecies in Christ; therefore, Christianity is true, and if true, then the king ought to become a Christian as well as himself. O, I know how that great heart yearns for his conversion, how its every fiber thrills with delight at the hope of saving another soul! And surely he is not entirely mistaken. Conviction has seized the king's mind, for he says, in obviously earnest tones, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Alas! alas! only "almost." The prisoner is deeply moved, and subdued in manner and voice. He replies, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

The scene is closed. He has returned to his prison. The court consult and decide that he has done nothing

worthy of death or bonds ; and Agrippa adds—and these are the last of his recorded words—“ This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar.” History is nearly silent concerning him after this, recording only the fact of his remaining identified with the Romans, aiding them at the destruction of Jerusalem, the city of his own fathers ; and then, accompanied by his sister, with whom he was charged with having been guilty of habitual incest, he returned to Rome, where he died at the age of seventy.

For one moment look *at the three different types of men* brought together in that regal audience-chamber.

In Governor Festus, you see a polished man of the world, *perfectly unconcerned, entirely indifferent* in relation to Christianity. He looks upon it with sincere contempt, as “ one of the Jewish superstitions,” unworthy of his attention, much less of his regard. Hear with what complete indifference, what chilling coolness, he speaks of the Lord Christ, as “ one Jesus, who was dead, but Paul said was alive.” This man never trembled before the proclaimed truth, as did his predecessor, Felix. Nay, to his intense worldliness, such an effect would be only the development of the most pitiable weakness ; and his prodigious self-conceit, the blindness of his moral perceptions, and the desperation of his depravity, were exhibited when, in violation of every law of even worldly and judicial propriety, he interrupted the defense of his prisoner with the insulting declaration, “ Thou art beside thyself !”

Of how large a class is he a type ! Ah ! how many

there are who, Festus-like, treat the gospel as a system with regard to which they have no interest ; which is just nothing to them, and which is treated by them with generally respectful, but icy indifference and neglect.

In this prisoner, this really educated man, this deep thinker, this mighty orator, this Christian, you behold one occupying a *directly opposite moral position*. He sees in Christianity both the wisdom, and power of God. He sees in it the divinely-provided supply of the great spiritual wants of every human soul ; he feels its claims, its duties, its objects, to be of such overwhelming importance that because of them he has cheerfully surrendered every thing the world calls desirable—position, scholarly ease, ambitious prospects ; for them he is ready and willing at any moment, if need be, to suffer martyrdom.

Festus, the world-absorbed man, thinks Paul, the Christianity-absorbed man, mad ; Paul knows that Festus is spiritually insane. These two men, therefore, represent the extremes of worldliness and godliness.

But, between *these two extremes stands Agrippa*, the representative man, with whom we have more especially to do ; who represents that large class of whom it may be said, that they are not, like Festus, entirely unconcerned and reckless about the gospel ; nor yet, like Paul, altogether and decidedly in favor of and committed to it. In him, therefore, you see the representative of those whose convictions have been aroused, whose emotions have been excited, but who are neither

entirely persuaded not to be nor to be Christians ; who, when good influences gather strongly around them, are sometimes almost persuaded to become Christians—almost persuaded to yield to a pleading Saviour, and a striving Spirit, but are never, altogether.

To Agrippa, as the representative of this class, I shall now direct your attention. It is this representative relation, which throws its chief interest around his name. To us the fact that he was a king, high in power, and exalted among his fellow-men ; the fact that he was lineally connected with the great Herod and Mariamne, is comparatively of no importance. But the simple fact, that for once he occupied the same moral position in relation to the gospel that many, very many, now occupy—this is what makes him and his career worthy of our special attention and study ; and with this record of him now open before us, I submit to you the following remarks suggested by it :

1. *In regard to the matter of a man's becoming a Christian, it may be considered, as it is presented in the Bible, in its relation to God and to the man himself.*

According to the former, the efficiency is all of God ; according to the latter, the duty is all ours. And an atonement having been provided, the convicting Spirit having been given, we are called upon to do our duty, with the assurance, that what we can not do shall be accomplished by the grace of God for us. Hence the gospel calls upon every man to repent of his sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, with the assurance,

based upon the promise of God, that he shall be pardoned, justified, and saved. It is, as thus explained, with regard to the matter of your becoming a Christian, as related to your own duty, that I now desire to address you.

2. *The method, God has adopted to induce men to become Christians, is persuasion.*

No man ever was, or ever will be, forced to become a follower of Christ. Force, the opposite of persuasion, has to do with matter, not with mind, which was created free, to be influenced, directed, and controlled by motives addressed to the understanding, comprehended by the reason, felt by the heart; and the process of bringing these motives to bear upon the soul, the Bible calls persuasion. Thus in our Lord's account of the rich man and Lazarus, when describing the former as in torment, begging that some one might be sent to warn his five living brethren, Abraham is represented as saying, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be *persuaded* though one rose from the dead." His enemies charged that "Paul had *persuaded* and turned away much people." In the synagogue at Corinth, during three months, he continued "to persuade them in the things concerning the kingdom of God;" and to the Corinthian church he wrote, in explanation of his burning zeal for the conversion of men, "knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Agrippa felt this persuasive power, for while clad in the robes of royalty, sitting as a judge, surrounded by

a court, he said to the prisoner, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

No man ever did, or ever will become a Christian only as he is persuaded to be one, as he perceives and feels the power of that vast array of motives drawn from heaven with all its glories; from earth with its Calvary cross; from his own spiritual wants, and from the fearful retribution awaiting the impenitent. Friends, if you are waiting for something different, for some audible voice from heaven to address you, for some miraculous power to overwhelm you, then your waiting is vain, and you may wait until the dismal terrors of eternal death shall gather about you, from amid whose thickening gloom shall be heard the fearful words, "I have called and ye refused; ye have set at naught my counsel and would none of my reproof; therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

3. *It is a fact, that but few ever come under the influence of the gospel, who, at some period of their life, are not, just as Agrippa was, almost persuaded.*

The circumstances, under which different persons are brought to feel the power of the persuasive influence of Christianity, are different. Some have felt them in similar circumstances with this man. They have heard those, in whom they could not but have the most implicit confidence, relate their Christian experience; the simple story of how they were brought out of nature's darkness into the light of the gospel, and in this way the most powerful evidence of the truth of religion has come to them. It was this that chiefly moved King

Agrippa. This, his experience, was Paul's great, incontrovertible argument, and therefore he rehearsed it to the crowd from the staircase in the castle of Antonia; he related it again before the august Sanhedrim, and he repeated it in melting utterances before the Cesarean court, for well he knew there was no answering that. So have I seen men weep as they listened to a convert's account of his conversion, the wonderfulness of the change he had experienced, the sweetnest of his first love, the glory of his new-born hopes, and I knew that in their secret heart they said, "O, that we could feel as he does!" and I was sure, that they were almost persuaded to become Christians.

Others have felt thus under some powerful sermon, by which their judgments were convinced, their consciences aroused, the spell of the world temporarily broken; and thoughts of duty to the loving Father, the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the nearness of death, and the fearfulness of a judgment to come, have so moved them that they were, then and there, almost persuaded.

Others still have felt this during seasons of affliction, when the long-suffering God, seeing that mercies failed to move them, has sent dispensations of judgment. Perhaps a dear babe, lovelier in their eyes than an angel, has been taken from them and laid in the cold grave; or a tender wife, devoted husband, cherished father, or fond mother, has been called away, and in the hour of blinding sorrow, when they felt the emptiness of earthly things, the utter powerlessness of the world

to heal their lacerated hearts, the transient nature of all beneath the skies, then, O then, they have been almost persuaded.

And still others have felt thus, when afflicted in their own persons. While lying on beds of sickness, pain and languishing, they have had time to think upon their sins, the folly of a worldly life; when they have felt the need of the comforts and supports, of something better than the world could give; the consciousness of their entire unpreparedness to die and go into the presence of immaculate holiness; then, as they approached so near that they could hear the roar of the Jordan's black billows, they have cried, "O! if God will only let me get well, I will become a Christian." They recovered, but they did not become disciples of Jesus. Ah! they were only "almost," not "altogether" persuaded.

Many others have been deeply affected, during seasons of revival. The Spirit strove, Christians pleaded with, and anxious friends wept over them. Perhaps they tried to pray for themselves, and went so far as to ask Christians to pray for them. But the revival passed, the harvest passed, the summer ended, and alas! they were not saved, simply because they were not fully, but almost persuaded. And others still have felt thus, as they have stood by the deathbed of a wicked man. They saw him toss from side to side in agony, his once strong frame emaciated to weakness, the cold sweat of death beading his brow, his eyeballs rolling in terror, despair gleaming from his blanched face. They heard his wild shrieks, as he vainly endeavored to escape

from the icy grasp of the king of terrors. At last they saw death triumphant. All was still ; but how dark, gloomy and boding was that stillness ! They could not but cry, " Heaven save us from such a death ! " But they saw another scene, a Christian's death. There all was peace and unearthly tranquillity. Smiles wreathed the dying face, an opening heaven shed its glory in that chamber. They could almost hear the rustling of the wings of angels, and as they heard the dying saint calmly say, " Farewell earth, farewell loved kindred, meet me in heaven ; welcome, welcome, home of my soul,

" Lend, lend your wings ; I mount, I fly,
O grave where is thy victory,
O death where is thy sting ? "

then they were almost persuaded.

4. *Let us now inquire, after some of the reasons on account of which, such persons are kept from full persuasion.*

It is not the lack of evidence of their duty, nor the existence of any impossibility in the way of their performing it. They have memories, and can recall their sins ; consciences, and can feel their guilt and obligation ; wills, and they can decide to make an honest, thorough effort to become Christians. There is a mercy-seat, and they can go to it. They have both time and opportunity to seek the Lord, and they are urged so to do by motives high as heaven, deep as hell, and broad as their eternal interests, and yet they are not fully persuaded. Why not ?

Some are not, because of *attachment to a particular sin which they will not abandon*. This is supposed to have been the case with Agrippa. It certainly is with many. They are attached, it may be, to some single sin, which they well know they must immediately abandon if they become Christians, and they will not do it. Friend, is this the case with you? Then let me assure you, that that which keeps you from Christ now, will shut you out of heaven hereafter. That one sin, thus clung to, will be your eternal ruin.

Others remain thus, because of a deep-settled impression, that *to become Christians they must become unhappy*. To them religion seems a melancholy thing. Strange delusion! For either they ought to become Christians, or they ought not. If they ought not, that ends the matter; but if they ought, then they should know that such is the arrangement of moral government that only in the course which a moral being ought to take, can his highest enjoyment be found. You think that to be a Christian is to surrender happiness. Tell me, are worldlings, devotees of fashion and pleasure, aspirants for temporary fame, with no hope in the mercy of God, no endeavors to meet the solemn responsibilities of existence, no preparation for eternity, no Saviour—happy? Is there not within them an aching void? Tell me, Christian, does your religion forbid a single lawful pleasure—the outburst and legitimate gratification of any original faculty of your nature? Tell me, were you ever profoundly happy until Jesus spake your sins forgiven? Tell me, Paul, amidst all

thy trials for Christ's sake, wast thou miserable? Nay! I hear his response, "Always rejoicing." "Our present light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Others shrink from the *duties which religion imposes*. They imagine that they could never perform them. To them, Christ's yoke seems not easy but galling; his burdens not light but heavy. They forget that the promise is, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee."

And still others are not fully persuaded now, because they vainly anticipate a more favorable opportunity in the future—a delusion which has ruined untold thousands.

5. *The position which Agrippa occupied, and which all those of whom he is the representative occupy, is one of both peculiar interest and danger.*

Assuredly it is one of *peculiar interest*. Heaven feels it to be such. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, every angel, and all the redeemed thus regard it. Earth feels it to be such. Every Christian, and even worldly companions, as well as the powers of darkness, thus regard it. The individual himself is conscious of it. Let it be known in a congregation, that there is one person there in this condition, and the attention of all will be attracted to him, and, while joy thrills every renewed soul, it is accompanied by a tremulous anxiety, for every intelligent Christian knows that a man may be almost and yet

never fully persuaded. Agrippa was, and yet he lived and died an impenitent sinner; and this has been the history of thousands on thousands since. They came up to the very door of salvation but never entered.

Moreover, it is a position of *imminent danger*, for if a man does not yield then, the probability is that he never will. In the case we have considered, I am deeply impressed that, when Paul had made his mighty appeal to Agrippa, and fondly hoped to see him bow to acknowledged truth, but instead of this heard him merely respond, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," the apostle's heart sank within him under the conviction that the king was a lost man, in view of the fact that if he was not fully persuaded then he never would be; and I detect a tone of profound sadness in his reply. Loosing his hold upon the individual soul he exclaimed, "I would to God that not only thou, *but all those* that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." And when you remember that guilt is in the ratio of light, how fearful does the accumulation of it in such a case appear! Better, far better had it been for Agrippa never to have heard the gospel, than to have heard it, come to the luminous point where pardon and salvation were within his reach, and then made the fearful pause! O friend, is this your case? Are you even now almost persuaded? If so, I rejoice, but with great trembling, for I know that you stand on the crisis-point of your destiny. I know that you may resist the good influences which are urging you to

the cross, lose your serious impressions, and be for ever lost. Full well I know that eternal things are suspended upon the decision to which you will soon arrive.

Suffer me to beseech you, by the weight of years of accumulated sin, by the mightiness and justice of God's claims, by the tears, blood, wounds, and agony of Christ, by the freeness and fullness of his atonement, by the strivings of the Spirit which may soon leave you for ever, by all the endless interests of your immortal soul, by the joys of the redeemed and the groans of the lost; yea, as the ambassador of Christ, as though God did beseech you by me, I pray you, in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God;" be not only almost, but altogether persuaded in your inmost soul to say,

"I'll go to Jesus, though my sins
Have like a mountain rose;
I know his courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

"Prostrate I'll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess,
I'll tell him I'm a wretch undone
Without his pardoning grace.

"Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will go,
And perish only there."



XII.

The Converted Man



THE JAILOR, The Converted Man.

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"Sovereign grace hath power alone  
To subdue a heart of stone ;  
But the moment grace is felt,  
The hardest heart begins to melt."  
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THE historical associations connected with the subject of the present lecture are full of interest. The city of Philippi, in which he lived, named after Philip, King of Macedon, who was its founder and father of Alexander the Great, is famous in history as the locality of many important events. There the decisive battle between Brutus and Antony was fought, after which, chagrined by his defeat, the former, who had slain the great Cæsar, slew himself. You may remember what effective use Shakespeare makes of this event in his tragedy of "Julius Cæsar," where he represents Brutus, sitting alone in his tent near Sardis, as visited by the specter of the emperor, who tells him in weird words, "Thou shalt see me at Philippi."

But omitting all other facts of general history connected with this city, I call your attention to that which gives its chief interest to this memorable place in the minds of all Christian students. Here, so far as we

are informed, the gospel was first preached in Europe. Here the first Christian church was organized on that continent. Over most of that vast extent Christian churches now exist, and are numbered by thousands on thousands, but that little one of Philippi was the first of them all. Of that first European church, the representative man to whom I shall now direct your attention was a member, and I propose, preliminarily, to notice *how strangely a sovereign God brought the gospel in contact with his pagan mind.*

Christianity spread quite generally through Asia Minor before a single ray of its light had pierced the moral darkness which covered the adjoining continent. But the time came when the morning that had arisen over the hills of Palestine and enlightened so many of the tribes of Asia, was to spread its glory over the adjoining millions who had so long sat in "the valley of the shadow of death." It had been in Paul's heart before this to go to Rome, but Providence hedged up his way, for had he then gone he certainly would have been expelled by the edict of the Emperor Claudius, which during that period banished all Jews from the imperial city. He then essayed to go into other portions of Asia, but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit, and while uncertain as to his ultimate destination, he reached ancient Troas, and there, in a night vision, "a man of Macedonia stood before him saying, 'Come over into Macedonia and help us.'" That was the condensed cry of Europe for the gospel. To a scholarly mind, what an intensity of interest encircles Paul at

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Troas ! He stands in the very footprints of the heroes of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*. That wave-swept shore had been covered by the vast invading armies of Darius and Xerxes, and fourteen centuries after Paul, those storied hills resounded with the war-cries of the Moslem, as the surge of Mohammedanism foamed around the last bulwark of Rome. While, therefore, we think of Paul at Troas, the shades of *Æneas*, *Achilles*, *Darius*, *Xerxes*, *Mohammed*, and their hosts, gather around him. But how superior in moral grandeur is his central position ! Like theirs, his eye is upon Europe. Like *Æneas*, he proposes to carry thither the germs of a new empire ; but, one whose nature and extent shall eclipse the Titanic proportions of Rome. Like *Darius* and *Xerxes*, he would invade Europe, not for aggrandizement to himself and ruin to it, but for its good and God's glory. Like *Mohammed*, he would carry a religion there ; not a false one, to be forced on its teeming millions by the sword, but that divine Christianity whose only weapon is love. Verily the picture of Paul at Troas, gazing over the blue waves of the *Ægean*, toward a world whose soil had never been pressed by the foot of a single gospel preacher, hearing the cry of imploring millions, is worthy of a place by the side of "Paul in chains before Agrippa," or "Paul on Mars Hill."

In company with *Timothy*, *Luke*, and *Silas*, having secured a small vessel, Paul sailed from Asia for Europe. O ! what a precious freight that vessel bore as she parted the billows of that classic sea, containing within herself, as did the *Mayflower* centuries after-

wards, the elements of a pure religion, and true civilization to a new world. As angels saw it glide over the dangerous deep, did they not cry, "God speed thee, honored ship! keep quiet the stormy winds, and give thee a safe voyage!"

Having landed at Neapolis, Paul and Silas immediately went to Philippi, where, learning that the Jews had no synagogue, but were wont to meet for prayer at the river side, they repaired thither, and there Paul preached his first sermon in Europe, the echoes of which reverberate to-day through the mighty nations that now thrive upon its soil. There the Lord gave him his first European convert. There he gathered the elements out of which, he organized the first European gospel church. But soon afterwards the apostles were involved in difficulties, and that too by means of a woman, one of a strange class who professed to have a spirit of divination, and by their soothsaying made much gain for their employers. Strangely enough, this woman followed Paul and Silas through the streets, crying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Fearing that such testimony might bring discredit upon Christianity, and anxious to show its power over such delusions, in the name of Jesus Christ, Paul commanded the evil spirit to leave her. He was obeyed, and the woman restored to her right mind. Their revenue from her soothsaying being thus cut off, her masters became infuriated, seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates, where, concealing the true cause

of their hatred, they charged that "these men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." The excitement became terrible. The magistrates ordered the apostles to be beaten. You ought to know, that such scourging among the Romans was very different, from the Jewish punishment of the same nature. In the latter, merely thongs or cords were used, the number of blows was limited to forty, and the practice was to give only thirty-nine. It was with reference to this Paul said, "Five times received I forty stripes save one." The Roman custom was to bind the prisoner with cords, and beat him with rods as long as the magistrate pleased. With reference to this he elsewhere speaks of having been "beaten beyond measure," and subsequently, at Corinth, he said that he had suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi.

Imagine that scene, when those two men, the faithful Silas and the great Paul, were bound, like infamous criminals, with cords ; their naked backs exposed to public gaze. upon which fell the heavy blows of strong-armed executioners, causing blood to stream at every stroke ! O, in that hour of ignominy and torture, think you not that they remembered the cross on which their Lord bore infinitely greater shame and agony for them, and that sustaining grace enabled them to glory in suffering for his sake ? The record says that after "they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison. and charged the jailor to keep them safely."

Behold now, through this long chain of events, the gospel brought from Asia to Europe, from Neapolis to Philippi, and then borne into the city prison, whose jailor, in the purpose of a sovereign God, is to be among the first male converts in Europe, a sheaf amid the first fruits of that glorious harvest, which was to be reaped on that wide field of paganism.

It is not probable that your conceptions of this prison are correct, for doubtless you think of some such place as the jails of our own land, where every necessity of prisoners is supplied. Far different were the prisons of the old world, in that olden time. They were dismal places, destitute of every thing save what was essential to the mere continuance of existence. The "inner prisons," especially, such as the apostles were confined in, were damp, cold, pestilential cells, from which all light was excluded, and the very chains rusted on the limbs of their miserable occupants. These "inner prisons" had throughout the Roman empire a reputation so full of horror, that strong and daring men shuddered at the thought of confinement in them. As was natural, in the civilization which then prevailed, the jailors of such prisons were rough, harsh, and cruel.

It requires only a small effort of the imagination to reproduce the scene, which exhibits these two scourged Christian men, as released from the officers and delivered to the jailor, with the command that he should "keep them safe." We see them, in their pitiable condition, led through the outer into the inner prison,

passing by cell after cell, whence the clanking of chains can be distinctly heard, until the appointed dungeon is reached, into which the jailor unfeelingly "thrusts" them, bleeding and faint; and then, as if not satisfied with this, we see him fasten their limbs, still quivering from the scourging, into the "stocks," where they can not ease their pain-racked bodies by a change of position, and then leaves them alone in the cold, clammy darkness. The magistrates who condemned them are sleeping tranquilly on their pillows. The jailor, satisfied that all is safe and secure, has sought his couch; but neither repose nor sleep can be enjoyed by these tortured Christians. The still hour of midnight has come. Silence reigns through the dismal corridors of this dismal prison, only intensified by the measured tramp of the sentinel. But, hearken! That all-pervading silence is broken. Sounds are heard such as never before echoed along those dreary walls. The criminal prisoners start up from their uneasy slumbers and listen with amazement; for these sounds are not piteous groans or lamentations, nor the sullen cries of anguish, or the wild ravings of agony; nay, nay! they are the utterances of prayer and praise to the Christians' God, issuing out of the "inner prison." And, lo! the Hearer of prayer, the God of grace and nature, answers; an earthquake shakes the prison to its foundation, its doors fly open, the chains fall from its inmates. The jailor aroused from sleep, and supposing the prisoners to have escaped, draws his sword to kill himself, for he knows that his life is the price

of their safety. But Paul cries, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." His fears subside; his heathen heart wonders and trembles. Bearing a torch, he rushes toward them; and, strange as it may seem, poor pagan that he was, he imploringly asked the most important question that ever fell from human lips—"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Ah! that was the very cry that arose from the lips of three thousand convicted souls at Pentecost. That was the very cry which has been uttered by every convert of the cross during these eighteen hundred years, in whatever land or circumstances. That was the very cry you uttered when you saw yourself a poor, condemned sinner.

Tell me now, if you can, with what exultant joy, in that strange place, at that midnight hour, while the glaring torchlight flickers on the damp walls, surrounded by loosed prisoners, among whom stands the jailor's family, all waiting to hear the reply, Paul, unmindful of his own sufferings, preaches to them Jesus—his life, his work, his agony, his death, his saving power, all condensed in that one sublime sentence, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "The storm is changed into a calm." Like Elijah in the wilderness, after the earthquake and the hurricane, "the still, small voice" comes to this trembling soul—he does believe; he grasps the blessed assurance, even as Paul himself had done in similar circumstances; he receives Christ as his Saviour, and sweet peace settles down on his troubled spirit. *He believes and is saved.* Behold the evidence *that he is a converted man in the*



change of his feelings toward the prisoners, whom but a few hours before he had treated so cruelly. His whole demeanor toward them is characterized by the utmost tenderness. He takes them out of the inner prison into the court, washes the clotted gore from their wounds and gives them food; and the record adds, that "he and all his were straightway baptized," which duty Paul must have urged upon him as the very next step after his conversion. And it further adds, that "he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." Picture now that strange family scene. The city is hushed in sleep, ignorant of what has transpired in its gloomy prison. See the rough jailor encircled by his household, while every face beams with an expression which never shone from them before, gazing with tears of mingled sorrow and joy upon the two persecuted and abused strangers, who now stand before them as their deliverers from the thralldom and guilt of sin, and the means by which they have been ushered into the glorious liberty of the gospel.

Only one thing more is recorded of this man. Alarmed by the earthquake, which phenomenon the Romans always associated with the anger of the gods, in the morning the magistrates sent an order to release his prisoners, which order he communicated, and bade them go in peace. After this we read no more of him personally; but we know that a Christian church was organized at Philippi, which was especially dear to Paul, of which doubtless this convert was a member; we know that this church flourished greatly, and thrice

sent money to the apostle to aid him in his poverty, which he thus affectionately acknowledges in his epistle to them: "I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

And now I pray you to observe,

1. *How beautifully this narrative illustrates the truth, that a sovereign God often "moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."*

He confines his work to no places. He made a pillow of rude stones to Jacob, a public highway to Saul of Tarsus, a chariot to the eunuch, the boughs of a tree to Zaccheus, a cross of ignominy to the thief, and a Roman prison to this jailor, all equally the gate of heaven. He does not confine himself to any particular method of awakening sinners. Sometimes he brings the truth in contact with souls in one way, and sometimes in another. One man is aroused under a sermon, another by the exhortation of a pious Christian, and another during a prevailing prayer. One is awakened by the thundering of Sinai, another by the love-tones of Calvary and another by some striking dispensation of Providence. Saul was stricken to the earth, falling like a dead man, by a light brighter than the noonday sun. This jailor was aroused both from natural and spiritual sleep by an earthquake. Indeed, there are some men who are so inveterate in their depravity that nothing but a signal display of omnipotence can arouse

them. Such an one was our representative man. God knew, that nothing but a terrible physical phenomenon could satisfy him of the divinity of the gospel Paul preached, and of his own consequent guilt as a sinner, and therefore he sent an earthquake.

O brethren ! this sovereign God, who makes the elements his servants, who rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm, who can work in ten thousand ways and none can hinder ; who speaks in the thunder, to which a world listens with awe ; who " hath his way in the whirlwind ;" who brandisheth like a sword the lightning that cleaves the sky, and makes the earthquake beneath the revealing of his power, as well as operates through more quiet and beautiful agencies ; who can and does subordinate every element in nature, and every event in providence to the consummation of his purposes of grace—this awful ; glorious God is ours ! He is the hearer of prayer. To him, amid the gloom of the inner prison of the Philippian jail, Paul and Silas prayed, although they knew not how he would answer. But while they prayed, in a manner perhaps surprising to themselves the answer came. The old prison rocked, the doors burst open, their feet were loosed from the stocks, and what was more and grander, the hard rebellious heart of the jailor was touched, and from his pallid lips they heard for the first time in Europe the cry, which sounded more melodious in their ears than earth's sweetest music could have done, " What must I do to be saved ?" Thus you see that what ordinary means would have utterly failed to ac-

comply, God accomplished by extraordinary means. You can easily imagine with what complete indifference, if not absolute scorn, this man would have heard a sermon from this Jew, how he would have ridiculed the prayer meeting in which Lydia was converted, but he could not withstand the method which a sovereign God adopted to bring him to the cross. Of all men in Philippi he was to human appearance the most hopeless, and yet in this way he became the first male convert. From this, oh people of God, take encouragement to faith in prayer! He knows the way to every human heart. He can reach those whom it seems impossible for you to influence. They will not come to you, *he can go to them in just the way* which they will not resist. He can find them in their secret places, and make them too tremble. He can trouble them too at the midnight hour. Pray then, pray earnestly, perseveringly; pray in faith, and the wonder-working Jehovah Jesus shall surprise you, even as he did Paul and Silas. Yea, I hear a voice from the throne saying to us, "As thy faith is, so shall it be unto you."

2. *This narrative illustrates the effect, which the gospel always produces on minds aroused to a sense of their true spiritual condition. It always induces, at least substantially, the utterance of the question which the trembling jailor asked.*

But, you may inquire, was this man religiously convicted, or was he only alarmed in view of the fact that his life was in jeopardy, according to Roman law, from the escape of his prisoners, whom he supposed had fled,

and merely frightened by the awful phenomenon of the earthquake? There are many, I am aware, who, having a theory to support, labor to establish this interpretation. On this account, let us look somewhat closely into this matter. Such affirm that when he asked "What must I do to be saved?" all he meant was, "What shall I do to save my life exposed to danger by the earthquake, and imperiled by the escape of my prisoners?" Now, that this is entirely false, so false that no man would ever have thought of it if he had not a wrong theory to prop up, is apparent from considerations like these:

1. If such had been the mere state of his mind, why should he ask this question of these two strangers, neither of whom could have answered it?

2. But the earthquake had subsided and no prisoner had escaped. Paul distinctly told him, "We are all here," before he asked this question. Whatever fears, therefore, he might have had, produced by these causes, must have been dispelled at the time when he made this inquiry.

3. Moreover, look at the circumstances. He knew that all through the streets of Philippi the Pythoness had proclaimed that these men were the "servants of the Most High God, sent to show to the people the way of salvation." How natural it was for him to believe this now, when he saw that the Most High God, in answer to their prayer, had mysteriously released them, and that the guilt of his cruel treatment of them should burst upon him, and that the Holy Spirit which ac-

accompanied the ministry of the apostles should do his office-work, and reveal to him his sinfulness and danger in view of what they had preached and he had done, so that, after his first alarm was over, he should stand a sinner, convicted of sin, its guilt and danger !

4. The answer which Paul gave to his question is conclusive. The great apostle perfectly understood the condition, and feelings of the man who stood trembling before him. It is not within the range of possibility that he should have misunderstood, the nature and import of this inquiry. He was deeply versed in all the developments of human nature, and all the operations of the truths of the gospel, when applied by the Spirit to the human soul, and his understanding of it is fully developed in the answer he gave: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." How utterly inappropriate this reply was on the theory we are considering ! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" Why, that would expose his life to the most imminent peril. Nay, nay ! Both Paul and Silas saw in this man an awakened sinner, aroused, convicted, inquiring what he should do to be saved from the guilt and consequences of sin. In this view alone is the answer appropriate. This is the answer which Christianity has given, does, and always will give to this cry of human nature, enlightened to a consciousness of its peril. And my point is, that this is the effect which the gospel always produces upon awakened souls. This effect it produced upon each of us who are now Christians, and how often have we heard it expressed in the earnest

words of others who were seeking salvation! O! from how many human hearts throughout the world, where the true gospel is preached and attended by divine energy, is this cry now being uttered! Heaven have mercy on ministers whose preaching never produces this effect! Heaven have mercy on churches in whose congregations this wail is never heard! Heaven pity those colleges among whose students this inquiry is never made! Heaven pity the man, who, for himself, or the woman, who, for herself, has never cried "What must I do to be saved?"

3. *Let us now analyze this question itself, which the jailor asked, and which exhibits the universal effect of the gospel when applied by the Holy Spirit to human souls.*

What does it involve?

1. As before implied, it involves a deep consciousness of the fact of our sinfulness, and an earnest desire to be saved from its guilt, pollution and penalty. Alas! neither this consciousness nor desire exist in any soul where the gospel is not thus applied. The only reason why all men do not ask this question is, that they have them not. If they had, they would utter this cry with their next breath. It is the existence of these two elements, consciousness of guilt and desire to be saved from it, in the soul, which extorts the utterance "What shall I do to be saved?" And inasmuch as nothing but the pure truth of God, and the attending Spirit of God, can produce these results, how important is it that that truth should be preached, plainly, earnestly,

and powerfully, and that the influences of that Spirit should be sought, should be implored incessantly and importunately !

2. It involves a sincere conviction that *something must be done* in regard to this matter. Ah ! that "What must I *do* ?" indicates the clear consciousness that further carelessness or indifference is out of the question ; that even a postponement of positive action is not thought of. And this is reasonable and proper. Just as when a man awakes to a realization that a deadly disease has fastened on his body, he feels that something must be done ; just as when imminent danger threatens property or life, all feel that something must be done ; so when a man's eyes are opened to see his guilt, to see that sin like a moral leprosy has permeated his soul with its pollution, that the terrible penalties of violated law are suspended over him, and that his well-being, not only during the life which now is, but that eternal one which is to come, is momentarily jeopardized, how can he but feel that something must immediately be done ? What other call to action can be so loud and imperative ? What are the claims of the world, whether pertaining to business, to pleasure, to mere intellectual advancement, or scholarly fame, compared with this present and awful necessity ? For hearken to that unsolved problem, given out by the Man of Calvary, which has come to us over the wrecks of eighteen centuries, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?" In fact, a general impression exists in almost every mind

that some preparation is requisite in order to meet a holy God, that something at some time must be done in order to be prepared for those great spiritual realities which await it in the future. Indeed, this is a suggestion of analogy, a dictate of reason, an instinct of nature, an impulsion of conscience, the farewell lesson of all experience. But he who, like this jailor, has received the truth of the gospel in his intelligence, and feels the workings of the Holy Spirit in his heart, thus revealing to him the necessities of his present condition and the imperativeness of present duty, feels aroused to immediate action. In his ears sound from heaven and earth the words "Delay not, delay not!"

3. It involves a clear understanding as to *who* is called upon to act. Therefore, you observe, the question is not "What shall God the Father do?" Nay, he has been "doing" all our lives long. In providence he has been sustaining, blessing us perpetually. Out of his word he has been calling, "My son, give me thy heart!" "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." The question is not "What shall God the Son do?" Nay, he hath loved as man never loved, wept as man never wept, suffered as man never suffered, died as man never died, arisen from the dead as man never arose, ascended to heaven in his glorified atonement body, sprinkled the mercy-seat with atoning blood, and, on the basis of his own accepted merit, intercedes for us poor, miserable sinners. The question is not "What shall God the Holy Ghost do?" Nay, he hath come to "convict the world of sin, of right-

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eousness, and of judgment to come." He strives with us, woos and would win us to duty. The question is not "What shall angels, or ministers, or Christians do for us?" Nay, it is, "What shall *I* do? I, the sinner, I, the guilty one, I, the needy one, I, who have done what I ought not to have done and left undone what I ought to have done, I, whose interests are involved and jeopardized, I, who shall either be saved or lost, either sing in glory or wail in woe—what shall *I* do? No one has, no one can have the interest at stake that I have in the condition and destiny of my own immortal soul."

4. Observe, I pray you, the intensity embodied in that "*What, what* must I do?" It implies a willingness to do any thing. In it I see a yielding of the heart, a submission of the will which indicates a genuine, thorough work of grace. Oh! when the jailor cried "What must I do?" the great work was already done in his soul; the chief obstacles were removed, the worst difficulties overcome. When Saul of Tarsus, lying upon the pavement before the gate of Damascus, overwhelmed with the blinding glory of a revealed Christ, cried, for the first time, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the mightiest work was accomplished. His heart was changed, his will subdued, and that transcendent intellect, that strong, profound, cultured spirit, which had been so full of elements of antagonism to the gospel, then entirely emptied of them, with all its starry powers furled, lay, in all the simplicity of a little child, at the feet of him who was

pierced for its redemption, willing to do any thing. Therefore it is that when pious parents hear that the son for whom they have prayed for years ; or a devoted minister learns that one in his congregation to whom he has long preached, and for whose salvation he has yearned ; or a Christian teacher who aims at something more than the mere intellectual culture of his pupils ; I say, when these hear that that son, or that hearer, or that pupil is sincerely asking this question, gladness takes the place of anxiety in their hearts, tears of solicitude are succeeded by those of joy. They see in it the work of the truth and Spirit of God. They see in it answer to prayer. They see in it the dawning of the day.

4. *Our last duty is to consider the answer which was given to this question.*

Observe what he was told to do. He was not told that all men were to be saved, and that, therefore, he need give himself no uneasiness. He was not told to go to work and reform his life and make himself a better man. He was not told to wait until he should have more feeling, or directed to pray or continue to seek salvation ; no ! he was told " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved ! " This he was told to do at once, then and there. And he did at once, then and there, commit his trembling soul to Christ, receive him as his Saviour, and believing rejoiced in a present salvation and walked immediately forward in the path of present duty. And, just the answer which was given to the jailor's question is given

by Christianity to every inquirer. Just what he did is the duty, and the privilege of every such an one.

But, my brethren, how difficult it is to explain this, exactly describe this to others! Blessed be God, we know what it is by experience; but how difficult it is to make it plain to those who have not experienced it, and what trouble many inquirers have in understanding what they are to do when told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Somehow this poor pagan jailor had none. He was simply told to believe, and he did. He had no metaphysical or theological embarrassment. He simply believed the truth concerning Christ as a Saviour, and trusted in him as his own. And this is saving faith—faith which brings salvation; simply this secures all the infinitude of good embraced in the atonement. O! I know how natural it is for an awakened sinner to doubt this, to disbelieve that simply this can be all that is required. Ah, he says, "I deserve to suffer;" and so he does, but Jesus was bruised for his iniquities and wounded for his transgressions. He says, "I deserve that God should forsake me and not hear my cry;" so he does, but when the dear Christ took our place, when he "who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," when he hung on the cross, his Father forsook him, and therefore he uttered that agonizing wail, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah! the true penitent says, "I deserve to die;

" 'Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce thee just in death;'

and so he does, but, glory to the name of Jesus, he died for poor sinners, "he tasted death for every man," "that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Yea, he wrought out and brought in everlasting righteousness, which, with all the infinitude of its merit, "is unto and upon every one that believeth." O! this is a mystery of grace! Before the wealth of the love, the divinity of the fullness, the godhood of the freeness this method of salvation embodies, angels stand amazed, redeemed souls bow in profoundest adoration; and the poor guilty penitent who receives it, and finds that through simple faith in the blessed Jesus he is made unto him "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," shouts,

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace.

"My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread, through all the earth abroad,
The honors of thy name.

"He breaks the power of reigning sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me."



XIII.

The Great Man.



PAUL,
The Great Man.

"Should any one ask me to name the man who of all others has been the greatest benefactor of our race, I should say without hesitation, *the Apostle Paul*. His name is the type of activity the most endless, and at the same time the most useful that history has cared to preserve."

"Over the vast extent of the Roman empire, Paul everywhere projects his shadow. What are we, preachers or missionaries of a day, before such a man?"—MONOD.

"He might have filled hundreds of martyrologies with his sufferings, all of which he generously underwent with a soul as calm and serene as the morning sun."—CAVE.

"It surely is of no slight importance that the history of the first age of Christianity should present us with one undoubted instance of a character which unites all the freedom and vigor of a great reformer with all the humbleness and holiness and self-denial of a great apostle."—STANLEY.

"Behold, the apostle of the cross sublime,
The warned of Heaven, the eloquent, the bold!
Who spoke to Athens in her hour of prime,
Braving the thunders of Olympus old,
And spreading forth the gospel's snowy fold
Where heathen altars poured a crimson tide,
And stern tribunals their decrees unrolled,—
How does his zeal our ingrate coldness chide!"

EARNESTLY do I beg you to credit me, when I affirm that I approach the discussion of the life and character of the apostle Paul, with a diffidence which I did not feel, in regard to any of those we have already consid-

ered. Do you ask why? Do you ask, "Is not his one of the most exalted characters, whether considered intellectually, religiously, or positionally, the pen of history has recorded?" I answer, Yes. "Does not his life abound in incidents, tragic, romantic, sublime?" Yes. "Does not an enduring interest encircle the memory of the man, who preached the first gospel sermon on the continent of Europe, and was the successful gatherer of Christian churches in proud pagan cities and remote Gentile realms?" Yes. "Was he not the first man of eminently great intellect and high scholarly culture, whom Christianity numbered among her converts?" and I answer, Yes. "Why then feel such diffidence with such a theme before you?" Ah, friend! I feel as I do, just because my theme is what it is—so grand, so rich, so vast. Volumes could not exhaust it; the highest genius finds within it amplest scope for its sublimest efforts. And if it be true, as it doubtless is, that greatness is requisite in order to comprehend true greatness; that lofty spiritual attainments are requisite in order to appreciate fully the character of one who possessed them in an eminent degree, then you will obviously see additional reasons for humble diffidence in the present effort.

Deeply conscious of these myself, I beg you to bear them in mind, and then I shall be sure of your kind and appreciative sympathy in an effort, which must of necessity fall far short of full justice to a character enshrined, in such a history as that of "the chief of the apostles." You will bear in mind that, as the title of

this lecture indicates, my main object is to *develop the evidences of Paul's greatness*.

Preliminarily, let us briefly survey the state of the Christian cause, at the historic point from which our investigations must start.

In its work twelve apostles were engaged, eleven of whom had been chosen directly by our Lord, and one by the church at Jerusalem. This number corresponded with the twelve tribes of Israel, and all their correlative symbols; such as the twelve pillars of the altar, the twelve precious stones of the High Priest's breast-plate, the twelve loaves of shew bread, and the twelve gates, and twelve foundations of the apocalyptic New Jerusalem. Besides these, there were seventy preachers, who had been subsequently appointed. All of these were good men and true, adapted to the work unto which they were called, but not one of them was a liberally educated man; and therefore, not one of them was qualified to carry the gospel into the highly cultured regions of the West, where it was sure to be challenged at every step by the acutest minds, the keenest debaters, the shrewdest logicians, the profoundest philosophers of the world. Among her six thousand converts, Christianity had not one man who, without miraculous aid, was prepared to grapple in her defense and for her propagation with her mightiest earthly foe, that scientific and philosophic western learning, whose prodigious energies were all subordinated to the support of paganism. Here then was a necessity, a real, pressing necessity, for the command of the ascended

Lord to his church was : " Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ;" and adaptation, in respect to qualification, ever has been, and will be, the law of successful operation.

Let us now, in imagination, go back some twenty years before the martyrdom of Stephen, which must have transpired within about three months after the crucifixion of our adorable Lord, and we shall see how Providence was preparing a man to meet the exigency to which we have referred—a man who should be qualified to preach Christ, and him crucified, in the focal points of worldly civilization.

Where shall he be found? Not in Jerusalem, not beside the lake of Galilee, not in any portion of the Holy Land, but far up north-west, in Asia Minor, on the northern coast of the Mediterranean, in a country called Cilicia. There is a large city, Tarsus by name, located on the river Cydnas. It is a famous city. It is the seat of one of the three great universities of the world. Sardanapulas, Cyrus, Alexander the Great, and Cæsar have lived here. Cicero, at one time, was governor of Tarsus. Here Mark Antony first saw the splendid, but corrupt Cleopatra. Here the imperial Augustus lavished royal honors and treasures. Here art, science, philosophy, eloquence and literature flourish. Strabo says, " The city of Tarsus attained, in very early times, great eminence in philosophy and all kinds of learning, so that, in science and art, it surpassed the fame even of Athens and Alexandria, and its citizens themselves were distinguished for individual excellence

in these elevated pursuits." Within it is an object, to us, of surpassing interest. It is not its great university, not the grand products of art which decorate its streets and buildings, not the magnificent mementos left by monarchs, warriors and orators. Nay, it is a little boy, whose young soul is just beginning to expand amid these culturing influences. Ah! no one but God has the faintest conception of the magnificent destiny which awaits that black-eyed Hebrew boy, as he plays on the river's verdant banks, over the surrounding storied hills, and through these streets!

Let us pause here. The youthful Saul is before you. Thoughts of others, only a little older than this one, rush upon my mind. South-easterly from Tarsus lies, embosomed in hills, the lake of Gennesaret. On its shores, at this very time, are boys, rough, rude, stalwart youths, of whom the world is to hear. Their names are Simon, Andrew, James, Philip, and Bartholomew. At Hebron there is a remarkable boy, whose name is John, and who is the joy of aged parents. At Nazareth, too, there is a wondrous boy, such an one as earth never saw before, and shall never see again; his name is Jesus. Combine now, in thought, that brotherhood of boys, who, in the purpose of the Eternal, are to spiritually revolutionize the entire race of mankind, and what transcendent interest encircles them! But the men of that day knew it not, any more than we know the future of the youth by whom we are surrounded. How high the privilege, how solemn the duty of doing what we can to prepare them for the re-



sponsibilities, far greater, perhaps, than we dream of, which may await them!

The following facts are recorded concerning the youth of Saul. He was early and strictly taught in the doctrines of Judaism; and inasmuch as the Jewish Rabbins taught that "he who does not teach his son a trade, trains him to steal," we are not surprised to learn that Saul was taught the then popular and useful trade of tent-making. How useful a knowledge of this business became to him in after years, his history plainly shows. Having obtained what education he could at Tarsus, without entering the great pagan university, he was sent to Jerusalem, where, amidst purely Judaistic influences, his faith might be confirmed and his general education prosecuted. At this period he is supposed to have been eighteen or twenty years of age. There he entered a celebrated school, which had been founded sixty years previously by Hillel, the father of Simeon, and was then conducted by the learned Gamaliel. Such was the professional eminence enjoyed by this great teacher, that he was called, "The beauty of the law;" and Luke informs us that "he was had in reputation of all the people."

Saul, *as a student*, is now before us. Easily we can conceive the ambition which fired his zealous, fresh manhood, inducing severe application and unremitting toil, in order to qualify him for the loftiest positional altitude, for nothing less than this could have satisfied such a mind as his. As a student he possessed rare qualifications. He combined in himself the elements

both of Tarsus and Jerusalem; Gentile energy and Jewish zeal.

Between this point and the next that we read of him years intervened, into which had been crowded events of amazing magnitude. The older boys, whom we saw on the lake shore, at Hebron and Nazareth, have all grown up to manhood. The boy of Nazareth has proved to be the long-expected Messiah. The boy of Hebron has proved to be the heaven-appointed herald of the world's Deliverer. The fisher-boys of Gallilee have become his apostles. He has been crucified, and arisen from the dead, and ascended to heaven. The day of Pentecost, with its miracles, has passed, and the cause, which both Jews and Romans believed to have died with its originator, still lives, and hath its thousands of living convert-witnesses. Saul has long since graduated from Gamaliel's school, but is still living at Jerusalem, a vigorous, active, scholarly man, of about thirty years of age. He is a leading member of the sect of the Pharisees, and you can imagine the utter contempt with which he, the educated, ambitious, conscientious, haughty Pharisee would regard the new religion, which had been founded by a despised Nazarene, who had been apprehended, tried and executed as a malefactor upon a cross; had, therefore, suffered the most ignominious of all forms of capital punishment; whose propagators were unlearned, uncultured men, chosen from the ranks of humble toil. In all the circles of his acquaintance opposition to this supposed heresy has been unanimous, and among his fellow-religionists is

the settled determination to put it down, to quench its increasing flame, if need be, in blood.

The sacred record, at this juncture, brings him to our view, as holding the clothes of those who were stoning Stephen to death.

Did the question ever arise in your mind, as to *why these executioners laid their clothes at Saul's feet*? Why, amidst that crowd, he was selected for this purpose? It has in mine, and I have looked in our books for an answer, in vain. Allow me to suggest one. You will remember that the synagogue, which caused Stephen to be apprehended, and which persecuted him before the Sanhedrim, and suborned witnesses to establish their charge of blasphemy against him, the record says, was composed of Jews from five foreign countries. It says, too, that one of these was Cilicia. Now this *was* Saul's native land; he was a Cilician, and doubtless belonged to this synagogue. If so, from what we know of him, we are sure that he was a leading member, and took an active part in these proceedings. The Jewish law made it imperative on the witnesses, through whose testimony a prisoner was condemned to be stoned to death, to be the executioners, do the stoning. How natural it was, therefore, that when these men stripped themselves for their horrid work, they should commit their clothes for safe-keeping into the care of one, who had been the leading man in summoning and employing them?

This view, which I submit, carries with it the force of a moral demonstration, throws light upon the po-

sition of our representative man, whom we find immediately after exceeding every other persecutor in the fiery zeal of his hatred toward the followers of Jesus. "He entered into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." He himself said, "Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God." So terrific were his persecutions, that the very name of "Saul" became as fearful to the saints in Jerusalem, as ever that of Nero, or Domitian, or Serverus was to those of Rome. At last he could find no more victims in the Holy City, for the disciples who had escaped death and imprisonment, had fled into other parts. Now, surely, we would think, if ignorant of the facts, that this mighty man of blood, whose fury has spared neither men nor defenseless women, would have ceased from his dreadful work. But he did not. Other ceased, he would not. The great elements of his nature were aroused by his superior zeal for Judaism, perhaps by ambition to acquire for himself a name and fame as its chief defender, and perhaps—indeed, I feel quite sure—that the fact incidentally alluded to in Acts, xxiii. 16–22, and referred to in Romans, xvi. 7, and xvi. 21, that his own sister and her son, his nephew, and other relatives had become converts to Christianity, inflamed his conscientious zeal into absolute fury.

He hears that in the far north-east, at Damascus, the capital of Syria, three hundred miles distant, a few Christians have found an asylum. He determines to apprehend them, and having obtained letters of authority from the High Priest, and gathering about him a

band of kindred spirits, he commences that memorable journey. It is the last of the kind he shall ever take, but he knows it not. Riding proudly at the head of his gorgeous retinue, the record says "he breathed out threatenings and slaughters." Let us follow him on the road we knew he took. The first place of note which he passes is Gibeah, the birth-place of Saul, Israel's first king, whose name he bears. The next is Bethel, where Jacob slept and dreamed, and who can tell but that the same angels who guarded the sleeping patriarch seventeen hundred years ago, are now gathering around this persecutor, the news of whose conversion they shall soon bear to heaven! Onward he proudly rides. Shiloh is passed. The vale of Ephraim is passed between Ebal and Gerizim, "the place of cursing and of blessing." Entering Galilee, he passes along the western shore of its beautiful lake, and after coursing over a sterile country for many a weary mile, in the far distance he sees the white domes of Damascus glittering in the rays of the sun. Nearer and nearer he approaches those gates, within which are the victims he seeks. O how little he dreams of what he shall experience, of what a change awaits him before he shall enter them, or of the circumstances in which his feet shall press the pavements of that proud city!

And now the predestined hour has come, the predestined place is reached, where the smiter is to be smitten, not by the red hand of vengeance, but by the power of sovereign grace. Jehovah Jesus hath better work for this great, but guilty soul. Behold! what

transpires. A great light suddenly shines upon them. It is not the concentrated rays of an oriental sun, for by its miraculous brilliancy and power, while all are struck speechless, Saul falls to the earth like a dead man. But he is not dead, for he hears thrilling words, saying, in tones of unearthly tenderness, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Tremblingly he asks, "Who art thou, Lord?" and his whole soul is overwhelmed with the answer, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest!"

Conceive now, if you can, the depth of the emotions which agitate this strong, profound spirit at this unlooked-for, overwhelming intelligence! Imagine the momentous conclusions to which, as with electric rapidity, that vigorous intellect must have rushed! The crucified Christ lives. He is divine! Christianity is true! Ah! how the madness, the criminality of his persecuting career stares him in the face! How his inbred and life-cherished views fade away into vain illusions, his boasted self-righteousness into loathsome filthiness, his intellectual pride into sheer folly, his heart-bitterness melts into tenderness! But the love-tones are again sounding in his ears, saying, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;" *i. e.*, "it is hard for such a soul as yours to go on in the course you are pursuing, to resist my truth and its high claims on you."

Now the work is complete. Sovereign grace hath conquered and won that mighty heart, which neither the preaching of apostles, nor the martyr death of

Stephen, arguments or miracles, had touched. That heart is changed, that will subdue, for he cries in earnest and submissive simplicity, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He recognizes Jesus, whom he hated, as Lord, owns him conqueror, bows to his authority, and dedicates himself to his service. He is told what to do, and perfectly obedient, he is led like a blind child into the house of Judas, where he remains three days; and then one of the very Christians whom he came three hundred miles to apprehend and take bound back to Jerusalem, comes to him with the fraternal words, which fall like music on his listening ears, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me unto thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." His blindness departs, and he stands forth a converted man—a Christian. Soon after, he was baptized, and immediately entered upon the ministry to which he was called.

The following is the briefest possible outline of his life, as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For a season he remained and preached in Damascus to the amazement of both Christians and Jews, and then departed into Arabia, whence he returned to the scene of his profession of Christianity and labored three years. A terrible persecution having broken out against him and the disciples there, he escaped death by being let down out of a window in a basket, and went to Jerusalem. The first Christian he met there was Peter, who welcomed him most heartily, but the mass of be-

lievers were at first afraid of him, even after his nearly four years' service in the good cause. He remained in Jerusalem only fifteen days, and then, after solemn public services, he was sent upon *his first great mission to the Gentiles*. Immediately he started for Tarsus, his native home, and subsequently, with Barnabas, labored at Antioch; and wherever they preached only a brief period, churches were organized. Having heard of the great sufferings of the disciples at Jerusalem, because of a famine that prevailed, he took up contributions on their behalf in the churches, and bore them, in company with Barnabas, to the Holy City. After a brief season, *these two were set apart by the church at Jerusalem, as missionaries to the heathen world*.

At first they went to Cyprus, where, having wrought his first miracle, his name was changed to Paul. Thence they departed to different points in Asia Minor, and after wonderful success, and equally wonderful escapes, they returned to Antioch, and joyfully rehearsed what the Lord had done through them. There Paul lived several years; and the next we hear of him is as a delegate in attendance at the council held at Jerusalem. After its adjournment, he made *his second missionary tour alone*, and preached in Lystra, Iconium, Ephesus, and Galatia, where he suffered immensely. Thence, in company with Silas and Timothy, he passed over into Europe, preached, was imprisoned and scourged at Philippi, whence he departed for Thessalonica and Berea, where great success attended him. Then we read of him at Athens proclaiming "The unknown

God" to the learned Areopagites, next at Corinth, a second time at Ephesus, and again returning to Greece, where he abode three months, and wrote his "Epistle to the Romans." This work completed, we see him a third time visiting Ephesus, where he was apprehended and brought before Felix. You remember how Felix trembled before the words of his prisoner; how his successor, Festus, upon Agrippa's advice and Paul's own appeal, sent him to Rome, and how he suffered shipwreck on his way thither. There he wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, and others. At this period he was an aged man, and yet, when strangely liberated from prison, we find him still fired with missionary zeal. He at once visited many of the churches he had founded in Asia; and then passing again over into Europe, he carried the gospel into Spain, and perhaps into Britain.

From this perilous journey he returned a fourth time to Ephesus, where he wrote his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Thence he went to the island of Crete; and finally, after this most eventful life, we find him once more at Rome, immured in a dungeon, whence he came forth only to suffer martyrdom by being beheaded, which terrible fate he met heroically, with the victor shout on his lips, "I am now ready to be offered. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

One important object of this lecture is now accomplished. You have compressed in this short space, an outline view of an eventful life, which stretched over sixty-eight years. This, however, was all we needed to give a distinct view of those labors, which throw light upon the character and capabilities of the man himself. What else I have to say shall be gathered under the following points:

1. With reference to *his personal appearance*, we have the following hints. History records that he was derisively called by his enemies, "the high-nosed, bald-pated Galilean." Nicephorus thus describes him: "Paul was a man of low stature; his complexion was fair, his countenance grave, his head small, his eyes strangely beautiful and expressive, his nose long, and his beard thick." The "golden-mouthed" Chrysostom said: "Although Paul was not very tall in body, perhaps less than five feet, he was tall enough to reach to heaven."

2. With reference to his *mental qualities, education, spiritual gifts, and ecclesiastical offices*, suffice it to say, at this point, that you behold in him an intellect of the highest order, combining the genius of the East with the acuteness and consecutiveness of the West. You behold that intellect enjoying the choicest educational advantages. You behold in him, moreover, the superadded gifts of the Holy Ghost; and all these qualifying him for the eminent position of "Apostle to the Gentiles." How grand the scope of that providence which found a Jew, born among the Gentiles at Tar-

sus, and "born again" among them at Damascus, who, by his rare combination of natural elements and miraculous conversion, was so admirably adapted to the mighty work of making known Christ to the teeming multitudes of that, to the Jew, "outside world." Paul devoutly and gratefully felt that such was the case. Hence he says, in glowing words, "that it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that *I might preach him among the heathen.*" What a display of the sovereignty of grace is here made!

3. The *aggregate* of his labors and sufferings in the prosecution of this great work was immense. During more than thirty years he toiled chiefly in great Gentile cities, shaking the very foundations of Paganism, successfully encountering the cunning of Judaism, the opposition of philosophy, the craft of idolatry, and all the combined elements of universal depravity. He planted Christian churches in most of the central points of western civilization, from the plains of Damascus to the olive groves of Spain, in spite of prodigious antagonisms, before which an inferior man would have been disheartened. He gave to doctrinal Christianity its first systematic development and form. In its elucidation, he blended the learning and logic of the schools with the light and love, which streamed into his capacious soul from the heart of his ever present and adored Lord. As to sufferings, what man in ecclesiastical history has left such a record as this? "In labors more abundant, in strifes above measure, in prisons

frequent, in deaths oft. Five times received I of the Jews forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

4. But he had other experiences than these—*exaltations* as they are termed—which few if any of earth have ever been favored with. Although, as he himself says, "born out of due time," Jesus appeared to him in glory, not only at Damascus, where he personally and vocally gave him his high commission, but again and again, at other times, he appeared and made special revelations, which "exalted" him above conscious suffering, and made him victorious over all his foes. Moreover, "whether in the body or out of the body" he "could not tell," but sure he was, that he was "caught up into the third heavens," where he heard things he might never communicate to mortals!

5. And of *his influence, past, present, and prospective*, who shall tell its sum? I can not. In the effort to compute it my brain grows dizzy, my imagination reels, my tongue falters! Why, look over the world at this very hour, and you see "historians with

their Pauline events; chronologists with their Pauline dates; geographers with their Pauline places; architects with their Pauline buildings; painters with their Pauline pictures; kings, heroes, and orators with their Pauline names; logicians with their Pauline logic and thinking; sculptors with their Pauline statues; poets with their Pauline verses; theologians with their Pauline theology and literature; churches, states, and nations with their Pauline memorials." The eloquent French preacher, Monod, said, "Paul projected his shadow over the vast extent of the Roman empire," but to-day that shadow is over the entire Christian world.

6. Friend, am I not justified in styling Paul *the representative of true human greatness*? Let us reflect somewhat more closely on this single point. *What are the elements of true greatness*? Is the highest order of mere intellect one of them? Assuredly he possessed it. Is the possession of a heart, full of tender sympathies and strong affections, another? This he had. His heart was loving and tender. "What mean ye to weep and break my heart?" was his tearful exclamation to the Ephesian elders. Is a wide range of profound learning, high scholarly attainment, still another? He possessed it. Are a sanctified moral nature, and a harmonious development of the spiritual and intellectual powers, fruiting out in spotless integrity, pure and beautiful character, such elements? You find them in his life. Is strength of will, directed and controlled by high principles of truth, another?

Such was his. Is true humility still another? See it beaming forth in utterances like these, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints," "of sinners of whom I am chief." Are renunciations of worldly honors, worldly aggrandizements, scholarly fame, and a devotement of one's entire nature and acquisitions during a lifetime, amid poverty and persecutions, to the welfare of humanity and the glory of God, crowning features of real greatness? His record shows that all of these were true of him. Is a noble external deportment, polished yet natural, refined yet unobtrusive, dignified yet not haughty, the outward badge of such greatness? Such was Paul's. An English skeptic was so struck with this that he exclaimed, "I will believe any thing that Paul states on his own knowledge, for he was a true gentleman." What dignity, approaching high sublimity, mingled with manly tenderness, you behold manifested when he stood a prisoner, with a chain clasping both of his arms, before Agrippa, after that masterly defense which has scarcely a parallel in the annals of the world's literature, when the convicted king said, "Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," and the immediate response of the apostle was, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all who hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as I am," and then, lifting his arms, while the clank of his chain rang through the hall, he added, with subdued voice, "except these bonds."

Some have supposed that Paul was not an orator, in

the ordinary sense of that term. Perhaps this inference has grown out of the expression in one of the epistles, where we read that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." But these words afford no ground for the impression, when properly considered. Paul did not say *that of himself*. He says *that certain Corinthians spake thus of him*. It doubtless was the utterance of prejudice, or of persons who could not appreciate the character of the apostle's eloquence. Such utterances in reference to distinguished men are not uncommon. It is said that there were audiences in Great Britain who "despised Foster and sneered at Chalmers and even Hall." I have myself heard men affirm that Daniel Webster was no orator. It must be remembered that "there are three kinds of eloquence: that of passion and sympathy, that of pure intellect, and the eloquence of imagination. To the first of these all respond; of the two last Paul's was a compound, and these have only power upon selected spirits." It was not therefore adapted to masses of men, as was that of Peter. I beg you, however, to bear in mind, that if there were those in licentious and pleasure-loving Corinth who thought Paul's "speech contemptible," the people of Lystra named him after Mercury, their god of eloquence.

And more than even this, is the testimony corroborating the view I have presented. Think of him at Athens, the culminating point of earth's civilization. Did a single Athenian orator or sage, a single member of the learned court of the Areopagus, composed as it

was of men of the highest culture, accustomed to listen to the loftiest eloquence, before whom he delivered an oration on Mars Hill—did one of these, I ask, utter a word derogatory to the character of his oratory? Verily not. They felt that his oration contained elements of power, unknown in those of Pericles, Demosthenes, or any of their famed orators. They felt “that there was a richness fuller than that of their own Plato, and an awfulness grander than that of their imperial Jove” in those few sublime sentences, in which, with loftiest genius, Paul condensed all the primal truths of nature and of religion, decorating their utterance with classical quotations, and concluding with majestic and irresistible appeals. Respectfully they said to the “Tent-maker of Tarsus,” “we will hear thee again of this matter,” and one of their number, Dionysius, abandoning his philosophy and paganism, gratefully received Christianity. Specimens of his written eloquence are preserved for us in his epistles. He is emphatically the epistle writer of the New Testament. Fourteen of the twenty-one came from his prolific pen. And as we read them, what power of analysis, breadth of thought, irresistibleness of argument, wealth of illustration, weight of pathos, graphicness of picturing, energy of denunciation, sublimities of imagination, depth of tenderness, bursts of enthusiasm and power of practical appeal meet our astonished gaze! He was the profound theologian, triumphant controversialist, invincible defender of Christianity during the age in which he lived. May I not now conclude that your estimate of his char-

acter coincides with the title I have given him, "Paul, the Great Man."

We have space left, only to notice a few of the many practical points this subject suggests.

One of these is this: *It is a sorrowful fact in regard to most of those whom the world calls great, that they have been such, not as a whole, but in one or at most a few particulars.*

There have been great warriors, great statesmen, great philosophers, great artists, great orators, great business men, great philanthropists and great religionists. But with greatness in one or more of these particulars, has there not almost always been found weaknesses, deficiencies, and sometimes even contemptible and degrading vices? Is not intellectual greatness often found associated with spiritual and moral debasement? The saddest moan I ever heard over the grave of New England's mightiest mental giant was, that his moral nature attained such poor development when compared with his world-admired intellect. It is a sad fact that many who stand highest now in the world's esteem, on account of their celebrity in single traits of character, or performances on certain fields of action, would lose even the respect of all good citizens, if the whole truth concerning them was known. They are not *great men*.

But in Paul you see one worthy of this title. You see not merely a great thinker, a great writer, a great orator; one possessed of great courage, patriotism, philanthropy and learning; one exerting a great influence,

but you see A GREAT MAN. You discover his whole nature, physical, intellectual and spiritual, harmoniously developed. You behold a purity of private character unstained, a public life unblemished, greatness of mind and heart, acquisition and position, sufferings and exploits, all combined, and the grand combination sanctified to the sublimest purposes by the supernatural power of a divine religion. O, as I look at his character towering up above surrounding humanity, it seems to me

“ Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Which, tho’ round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Another of these points is this. *We can not fail to be impressed with how much this great man was indebted to Christianity.*

With all his rare natural endowments, suppose he had remained in the spiritual condition he was when the exalted and sovereign Jesus met him on the road to Damascus. What would he then have become? Perhaps the successor of Gamaliel; the most learned of the Rabbis; the High Priest; at once the head of the Sanhedrim and the idol of Judaism. But what would his manhood have become? His mind never could have reached the expansion and power it did. His heart would have retained its increasingly corrupt and corrupting elements. His influence would have been narrow as the ever-narrowing limits of Judaism. His life would have been a failure! No one knew this as well

as he did himself ; and, therefore, when his fame was widest, his influence was greatest, he wrote, out of a grateful soul, these words, " By the grace of God, I am what I am," and his epistles abound with similar acknowledgments. What was essential to him is essential to all. Nothing but an experimental acquaintance with the regenerating, sanctifying and inspiring influence of the grace of Christianity can enable any man to become truly great.

The last of these points we have time to notice is this :

What a proof of the truth of Christianity this history presents !

The main facts of Paul's life, as recorded in the New Testament, are fully confirmed by profane writers. That he was a prominent and powerful enemy of the gospel ; that he suddenly and strangely became a convert to it ; that he sacrificed the brightest prospects and spent his whole subsequent life in its service, and died a martyr to its principles, are facts as well attested as any recorded in the history of the world. The early writers against Christianity confirm them. I beg you to notice only a simple part of this proof, *that which is found in the conversion of such a man.* To only the facts of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ is greater prominence given in the New Testament than that which is given to this conversion. It is set forth minutely and repeatedly. Besides allusions to it in the epistles, three distinct and detailed accounts are given of it in the Acts of the Apostles. It was indeed wonderful, amazing. But to none was it so sur-

prising as to himself. He gloried in it. He related it publicly again and again. We may imagine him as exclaiming,

“ See me, see me, once a rebel,
Vanquished at his cross I lie;
Cross! to tame earth's proudest, able—
Who was e'er so proud as I?
He convinced me, He subdued me;
He chastised me, He renewed me;
The nails that nailed, the spear that slew him,
Transfixed my heart, and bound me to him!
See me, see me, once a rebel,
Vanquished at his feet I lie!”

What but a divine religion could have wrought this surprising work! Christianity is divine. It is eternal truth. By its fruits we know it. When attended by the Holy Spirit, it is more than a match for the combined trinity of depravity, “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” It can subdue the most bitter opposition, humble the proudest soul, soften and regenerate the hardest heart, and change the most obdurate will. An old writer has said, “If Stephen had not prayed, Saul would not have been converted.” O, then, people of God, ye who feel and know that “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation,” fear not to pray for the most wicked men, for those who, like Saul, seem most unapproachable to ordinary influences. He who, in answer, we believe, to prayer, met and sweetly triumphed over the proud, haughty, persecuting Pharisee before the gates of Damascus, still reigns. “All power is given to him in heaven and in earth.” Those

for whom you pray can not be more hopeless than Saul was, and yet our sovereign Lord had only to reveal himself, speak the life-inspiring words, and like a child, subdued, melted, humbled, the persecutor lay at his feet. Then pray, pray; pray earnestly, pray believingly, pray perseveringly, and ye shall have occasion to adore anew the omnipotency of grace.

“And now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

THE END.

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